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"The Raggedy Man"

Memorial Edition

The Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley

IN TEN VOLUMES

Including Poems and Prose Sketches, many of which have not heretofore been published; an authentic Biography, an elaborate Index and numerous Illustrations in color from Paintings by Howard Chandler Christy and Ethel Franklin Betts

VOLUME VI

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SAN RAFAEL, CAL.

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SAN RAFAEL, CAL.

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THE BUMBLEBEE

YOU better not fool with a Bumblebee!—
Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!
They're lazy to look at, an' kind o' go
Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,
An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,
Danglin' their legs as they drone about
The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in
'Ithout ist a-tumble-un out ag'in!
Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way
In a jimson-blossom, I did, one day,—
An' I ist grabbed it—an' nen let go—
An' *"Ooh-ooh! Honey! I told ye so!"*
Says The Raggedy Man; an' he ist run
An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,
An' says: "They *has* be'n folks, I guess,
'At thought I wuz predjudust, more er less,—
Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumblebee
Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!"

A PROSPECTIVE GLIMPSE

JANEY PETTIBONE'S the best
Little girl an' purtiest
In this town! an' lives next door,
Up-stairs over their old store.

Little Janey Pettibone
An' her Ma lives all alone,—
'Cause her Pa broke up, an' nen
Died 'cause they ain't rich again.

Little Janey's Ma she sews
Fer my Ma sometimes, an' goes
An' gives music-lessuns—where
People's got pianers there.

But when Janey Pettibone
Grows an' grows, like I'm a-growin',
Nen *I'm* go' to keep a store,
An' sell things—an' sell some more—

Till I'm ist as rich!—An' nen
Her Ma can be rich again,—
Ef *I'm* rich enough to own
Little Janey Pettibone!

THE OLD TRAMP

A'OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,
An' The Raggedy Man he caught
An' roust him up, an' chased him off
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old Tramp hollered back an' said,—
"You're a *purty* man!—*You* air!—
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,
An' a nose like a Bartlutt pear!"

THE PET COON

NOEY BIXLER ketched him, an' fetched him in to me
When he's ist a little teenty-weenty baby-coon
'Bout as big as little pups, an' tied him to a tree;
An' Pa gived Noey fifty cents, when he come home at noon.
Nen he buyed a chain fer him, an' little collar, too,
An' sawed a hole in a' old tub an' turnt it upside down;
An' little feller'd stay in there and won't come out fer you—
'Tendin' like he's kind o' skeered o' boys 'at lives in town.

Now he ain't afeard a bit! he's ist so fat an' tame,
We on'y chain him up at night, to save the little chicks.
Holler "Greedy! Greedy!" to him, an' he knows his name,
An' here he'll come a-waddle-un, up fer any tricks!
He'll climb up my leg, he will, an' waller in my lap,
An' poke his little black paws 'way in my pockets where
They's beechnuts, er chinkypins, er any little scrap
Of anything 'at's good to eat—an' *he* don't care!

An' he's as spunky as you please, an' don't like dogs
at all.—
Billy Miller's black-an'-tan tackled him one day,
An' "Greedy" he ist kind o' doubled all up like a
ball,
An' Billy's dog he gived a yelp er two an' runned
away!
An' nen when Billy fighted me, an' hit me with a
bone,
An' Ma she purt' nigh ketched him as he dodged
an' skooted through
The fence, she says, "You better let my little boy
alone,
Er 'Greedy,' next he whips yer dog, shall whip
you, too!"

AN IMPETUOUS RESOLVE

WHEN little Dickie Swope's a man,
He's go' to be a Sailor;
An' little Hamey Tincher, he's
A-go' to be a Tailor:
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be
A stylish Carriage-Maker;
An' when *I* grow a grea'-big man,
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it
An' buy as fine a double-rig
As ever Bud kin make it:
An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,
An' we'll drive off togevver,
A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road
Ferever an' ferever!

THE HUNTER BOY

HUNTER Boy of Hazelwood—
Happier than Robin Hood!
Dance across the green, and stand
Suddenly, with lifted hand
Shading eager eyes, and be
Thus content to capture me!—
Cease thy quest for wilder prey
Than my willing heart to-day!

Hunter Boy! with belt and bow,
Bide with me, or let me go,
An thou wilt, in wake of thee,
Questing for mine infancy!
With thy glad face in the sun,
Let thy laughter overrun
Thy ripe lips, until mine own
Answer, ringing, tone for tone!

O my Hunter! tilt the cup
Of thy silver bugle up,
And like wine pour out for me
All its limpid melody!

Pout thy happy lips and blare
Music's kisses everywhere—
Whiff o'er forest, field and town,
Tufts of tune like thistle-down!
O to go, as once I could,
Hunter Boy of Hazelwood!

BILLY GOODIN'

A big piece o' pie, and a big piece o' puddin'—
I laid it all by fer little Billy Goodin'!

—Boy Poet

LOOK so neat an' sweet in all yer frills an' fancy
pleatin'!
Better shet yer kitchen, though, afore you go to
Meetin'!—
Better hide yer mince-meat an' stewed fruit an'
plums!
Better hide yer pound-cake an' bresh away the
crumbs!
Better hide yer cubbord-key when Billy Goodin'
comes,
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Sight o' Sund'y-doin's done 'at ain't done in
Meetin'!
Sun acrost yer garden-patch a-pourin' an' a-beatin';

Meller apples drappin' in the weeds an' roun' the groun'—
Clingstones an' sugar-pears a-ist a-plunkin' down!—
Better kind o' comb the grass 'fore Billy comes aroun',
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Billy Goodin' ain't a-go' to go to any Meetin'!
We 'ull watch an' ketch an' give the little sneak a beatin'!—
Better hint *we* want'o stay 'n' snoop yer grapes an' plums!
Better eat 'em all yerse'f an' suck yer stingy thumbs!–
Won't be nothin' anyhow when Billy Goodin' comes!—
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

SONG—FOR NOVEMBER

WHILE skies glint bright with bluest light
Through clouds that race o'er field and town,
And leaves go dancing left and right,
And orchard apples tumble down;
While schoolgirls sweet, in lane or street,
Lean 'gainst the wind and feel and hear
Its glad heart like a lover's beat,—
So reigns the rapture of the year.

Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!
Though winter clouds be looming,
Remember a November day
Is merrier than mildest May
With all her blossoms blooming.

While birds in scattered flight are blown
Aloft and lost in bosky mist,
And truant boys scud home alone
'Neath skies of gold and amethyst;
While twilight falls, and echo calls
Across the haunted atmosphere,
With low, sweet laughs at intervals,—
So reigns the rapture of the year.

Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!
Though winter clouds be looming,
Remember a November day
Is merrier than mildest May
With all her blossoms blooming.

AT AUNTY'S HOUSE

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's house—
'Way in the country!—where
They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—
An' all's outdoors an' air!—
An' orchurd-swing; an' churry trees—
An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these-
Here redhead birds steals all they please,
An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—
W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,
We et out on the porch!

Wite where the cellar door wuz shut
The table wuz; an' I
Let Aunty set by me an' cut
My vittuls up—an' pie.
'Tuz awful funny!—I could see
The redheads in the churry tree;
An' beehives, where you got to be
So keerful, goin' by;—
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—
We et out on the porch!

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things
'At Ma don't 'low me to—
An' *chickun-gizzurds*—(don't like *wings*
Like *Parunts* does! do *you?*)
An' all the time the wind blowed there,
An' I could feel it in my hair,
An' ist smell clover *ever*'where!—
An' a old redhead flew
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,
When we et on the porch!

LIFE AT THE LAKE

THE green below and the blue above!—
The waves caressing the shores they love:
Sails in haven, and sails afar
And faint as the water-lilies are
In inlets haunted of willow wands,
Listless lovers, and trailing hands
With spray to gem them and tan to glove.—
The green below and the blue above.

The blue above and the green below!
Would that the world were always so!—
Always summer and warmth and light,
With mirth and melody day and night!
Birds in the boughs of the beckoning trees,
Chirr of locusts and whiff of breeze—
World-old roses that bud and blow.—
The blue above and the green below.

The green below and the blue above!
Heigh! young hearts and the hopes thereof!—
Kate in the hammock, and Tom sprawled on
The sward—like a lover's picture, drawn

By the lucky dog himself, with Kate
To moon o'er his shoulder and meditate
On a fat old purse or a lank young love.—
The green below and the blue above.

The blue above and the green below!
Shadow and sunshine to and fro.—
Season for dreams—whate'er befall
Hero, heroine, hearts and all!
Wave or wildwood—the blithe bird sings,
And the leaf-hid locust whets his wings—
Just as a thousand years ago—
The blue above and the green below.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

SEPULTURE—BOSTON, AUGUST 13, 1890

DEAD? this peerless man of men—
Patriot, Poet, Citizen!—
Dead? and ye weep where he lies
Mute, with folded eyes!

Courage! All his tears are done;
Mark him, dauntless, face the sun!
He hath led you.—Still, as true,
He is leading you.

Folded eyes and folded hands
Typify divine commands
He is hearkening to, intent
Beyond wonderment.

'Tis promotion that has come
Thus upon him. Stricken dumb
Be your moanings dolorous!
God knows what He does.

Rather, as your chief, *aspire!*—
Rise and sieze his toppling lyre,
And sing Freedom, Home and Love,
And the rights thereof!

Ere in selfish grief ye sink,
Come! catch rapturous breath and think—
Think what sweep of wing hath he,
Loosed in endless liberty.

THE BOYS' CANDIDATE

LAS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,
He bringed a watermelon home—
An' half the boys in town
Come taggin' after him.—An' he
Says, when we et it,—"*Gracious me!*
'S the boy-house fell down?"

CHRISTINE

Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall.
—TENNYSON

MOST quaintly touching, in her German
tongue—
Haply, had he but mastered that as well
As she his English, this were not to tell:—
Touring through her dear Fatherland, the young
American first found her, as she sung
"Du bist mir nah' und doch so fern," while fell
Their eyes together, and the miracle
Of love and doom was wrought. Her father wrung
The lovers from each other's arms forever—
Forgive him, all forgiving souls that can!
She died that selfsame hour—just paused to
write
Her broken heart's confession thus: "I never
Was O so loving in a young gentleman
Than yet I am to you. So ist Good night."

OLD JOHN CLEVENGER ON BUCKEYES

OLD John Clevenger lets on,
Allus, like he's purty rough
Timber.—He's a grate old John!—
"Rough?"—don't swaller no sich stuff!
Moved here, sence the war was through,
From Ohio—somers near
Old Bucyrus,—loyal, too,
As us "Hoosiers" is to *here!*
Git old John stirred up a bit
On his old home stompin'-ground—
Talks same as he lived thare yit,
When some subject brings it round—
Like, fer instunce, Sund'y last,
Fetched his wife, and et and stayed
All night with us.—Set and gassed
Tel plum midnight—'cause I made
Some remark 'bout "buckeyes" and
"What was buckeyes good fer?"—So,
Like I 'lowed, he waved his hand
And lit in and let me know:—

" 'What is Buckeyes good fer?'—What's
Pineys and *fergit-me-nots?*—
Honeysuckles, and sweet peas,
And sweet-williamsuz, and these
Johnny-jump-ups ev'rywhare,
Growin' round the roots o' trees
In Spring-weather?—what air *they*
Good fer?—kin you tell me—*Hey?*
'Good to look at?' Well they air!
'Specially when *Winter's* gone,
Clean *dead-cert'in!* and the wood's
Green again, and sun feels good's
June!—and shed your blame boots on
The back porch, and lit out to
Roam round like you ust to do,
Bare-foot, up and down the crick,
Whare the buckeyes growed so thick,
And witch-hazel and pop-paws,
And hackberries and black-haws—
With wild pizen-vines jis knit
Over and *en-nunder* it,
And wove round it all, I jing!
Tel you couldn't hardly stick
A durn *case-knife* through the thing!
Wriggle round through *that;* and then—
All het-up, and scratched and tanned,
And muskeeter-bit and mean-
Feelin'—all at onc't again,
Come out suddent on a clean
Slopin' little hump o' green
Dry soft grass, as fine and grand

As a pollor-sofy!—And
Jis pile down thare!—and tell *me*
Anywhares you'd ruther be—
'Ceptin' *right thare,* with the wild-
Flowrs all round ye, and your eyes
Smilin' with 'em at the skies,
Happy as a little child!
Well!—right here, *I* want to say,
Poets kin talk all they please
'Bout 'wild-flowrs, in colors gay,'
And 'sweet blossoms flauntin' theyr
Beauteous fragrunce on the breeze'—
But the sight o' *buckeyes* jis
Sweet to me as *blossoms* is!

"I'm *Ohio-born*—right whare
People's *all* called 'Buckeyes' *thare*—
'Cause, I s'pose, our buckeye crap's
Biggest in the world, perhaps!—
Ner my head don't stretch my hat
Too much on account o' *that!*—
'Cause it's Natchur's ginerus hand
Sows 'em broadcast ore the land,
With eye-single fer man's good
And the gineral neghborhood!
So *buckeyes* jis natchurly
'Pears like *kith-and-kin* to *me!*
'S like the good old sayin' wuz,
'Purty *is* as purty *does!*'—
We can't *eat* 'em, cookd er raw—
Yit, I mind, *tomattusuz*

Wuz considerd pizenus
Onc't—and dasen't eat 'em!—*Pshaw*—
'Twouldn't take *me* by supprise,
Some day, ef we et *buckeyes!*
That, though, 's nuther here ner thare! —
Jis the Buckeye, whare we air,
In the present times, is what
Ockuppies my lovin' care
And my most perfoundest thought!
. . . Guess, this minute, what I got
In my pocket, 'at I've packed
Purt' nigh forty year.—A dry,
Slick and shiny, warped and cracked,
Wilted, weazened old *buckeye!*
What's it *thare* fer? What's my hart
In my *brest* fer?—'Cause it's part
Of my *life*—and 'tends to biz—
Like this *buckeye's* bound to act—
'Cause *it* 'tends to *Rhumatiz!*

". . . Ketched more *rhumatiz* than *fish,*
Seinen', onc't—and pants froze on
My blame legs!—And ust to wish
I wuz well er *dead and gone!*
Doc give up the case, and shod
His old hoss again and stayed
On good roads!—*And thare I laid!*
Pap he tuck some bluegrass sod
Steeped in whisky, bilin'-hot,
And socked *that* on! Then I got
Sorto' holt o' him, *somehow*—

Kindo' crazy-like, they say—
And I'd *killed* him, like as not,
Ef I hadn't swooned away!
Smell my scortcht pelt purt' nigh now!
Well—to make a long tale short—
I hung on the blame disease
Like a shavin'-hoss! and sort
O' wore it out by slow degrees—
Tel my legs wuz straight enugh
To poke through my pants again
And kick all the doctor-stuff
In the fi-er-place! Then turned in
And tuck Daddy Craig's old cuore—
Jis a buckeye—and that's *shore.*—
Hain't no case o' rhumatiz
Kin subsist whare buckeyes is!"

MEREDITH NICHOLSON

KEATS, and Kirk White, David Gray and the rest of you
Heavened and blest of you young singers gone,—
Slender in sooth though the theme unexpressed of you,
Leave us this like of you yet to sing on!
Let your Muse mother him and your souls brother him,
Even as now, or in fancy, you do:
Still let him sing to us ever, and bring to us
Musical musings of glory and—you.

Never a note to do evil or wrong to us—
Beauty of melody—beauty of words,—
Sweet and yet strong to us comes his young song to us,
Rippled along to us clear as the bird's.
No fame elating him falsely, nor sating him—
Feasting and fêting him faint of her joys,
But singing on where the laurels are waiting him,
Young yet in art, and his heart yet a boy's.

MY RUTHERS

[*Writ durin' State Fair at Indanoplis, whilse visitin' a Soninlaw then residin' thare, who has sence got back to the country whare he says a man that's raised there ort to a-stayed in the first place.*]

I TELL you what I'd ruther do—
  Ef I only had my ruthers,—
I'd ruther work when I wanted to
  Than be bossed round by others;—
    I'd ruther kindo' git the swing
    O' what was *needed,* first, I jing!
    Afore I *swet* at anything!—
  Ef I only had my ruthers;—
In fact I'd aim to be the same
  With all men as my brothers;
And they'd all be the same with *me*—
  Ef I only had my ruthers.

I wouldn't likely know it all—
  Ef I only had my ruthers;—
I'd know *some* sense, and some baseball—
  Some *old* jokes, and—some others:
    I'd know *some politics,* and 'low
    Some tarif-speeches same as now,
    Then go hear Nye on "Branes and How

To Detect Theyr Presence." *T'others.*
That stayed away, I'd *let* 'em stay—
All my dissentin' brothers
Could chuse as shore a kill er cuore,
Ef I only had my ruthers.

The pore 'ud git theyr dues *some*times—
Ef I only had my ruthers,—
And be paid *dollars* 'stid o' *dimes,*
Fer childern, wives and mothers:
Theyr boy that slaves; theyr girl that sews—
Fer *others*—not herself, God knows!—
The grave's *her* only change of clothes!
. . . Ef I only had my ruthers,
They'd all have "stuff" and time enugh
To answer one-another's
Appealin' prayer fer "lovin' care"—
Ef I only had my ruthers.

They'd be few folks 'ud ast fer trust,
Ef I only had my ruthers,
And blame few business men to bu'st
Theyrselves, er harts of others:
Big Guns that come here durin' Fair-
Week could put up jest anywhare,
And find a full-and-plenty thare,
Ef I only had my ruthers:
The rich and great 'ud 'sociate
With all theyr lowly brothers,
Feelin' *we* done the honorun—
Ef I only had my ruthers.

GOD'S MERCY

BEHOLD, one faith endureth still—
Let factions rail and creeds contend—
God's mercy *was,* and *is,* and *will*
Be with us, foe and friend.

THE WHITHERAWAYS

Set Sail October 15, 1890

THE Whitheraways!—That's what I'll have to call
You—sailing off, with never word at all
Of parting!—sailing 'way across the sea,
With never one good-by to *me*—to ME!

Sailing away from me, with no farewell!—
Ah, Parker Hitt and sister Muriel—
And Rodney, too, and little Laurance—all
Sailing away—just as the leaves, this Fall!

Well, then, *I* too shall sail on cheerily
As now you all go sailing o'er the sea:
I've *other* little friends with me on shore—
Though they but make me yearn for *you* the more!

And so, sometime, dear little friends afar,
When this faint voice shall reach you, and you are
All just a little homesick, you must be
As brave as I am now, and think of me!

Or, haply, if your eyes, as mine, droop low,
And would be humored with a tear or so,—
Go to your *Parents,* Children! let *them* do
The *crying*—'twill be easier for them to!

A BOY'S MOTHER

MY mother she's so good to me,
Ef I was good as I could be,
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;
She loves me when I'm good er bad;
An', what's a funniest thing, she says
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;
An' I hug *her,* an' hug my Pa
An' love him purt' nigh as much as Ma.

THE RUNAWAY BOY

WUNST I sassed my Pa, an' he
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—
Nen when he wuz gone that day,
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,
An' clumbed over our back fence
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen
I runned some—an' runned again,
When I met a man 'at led
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane
Where wuz little pigs a-playin';
An' a grea'-big pig went *"Booh!"*
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they
Was somebody hollered *"Hey!"*
An' I ist looked ever'where,
An' they wuz nobody there.

I *want* to, but I'm 'fraid to try
To go back. . . . An' by an' by
Somepin' hurts my th'oat inside—
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

Nen a grea'-big girl come through
Where's a gate, an' telled me who
Am I? an' ef I tell where
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell
What's my *name;* an' she says "well,"
An' ist tooked me up an' says
"She know where I live, she guess."

Nen she telled me hug wite close
Round her neck!—an' off she goes
Skippin' up the street! An' nen
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,
Kissed the big girl too, an' *she*
Kissed me—ef I p'omise shore
I won't run away no more!

THE FISHING-PARTY

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me
An' my Pa an' Ma, all three,
When they wuz a picnic, 'way
Out to Hanch's Woods, one day.

An' they wuz a crick out there,
Where the fishes is, an' where
Little boys 'taint big an' strong
Better have their folks along!

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!
An' my Ma she said she wished
Me an' her was home; an' Pa
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say
Anything, er sneeze, er play,
Hain't no fish, alive er dead,
Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we
Got back home; an' Ma, says she,
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't
Eat no fish, an' says he don't
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me
When I choked! . . .Ma, didn't he?

THE RAGGEDY MAN

O THE Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—
Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good,
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at *boys* can't do.—
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

"He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me"

An' The Raggedy Man one time say he
Pick' roast' rambos from a' orchurd-tree,
An' et 'em—all ist roast' an' hot!—
An' it's so, too!—'cause a corn-crib got
Afire one time an' all burn' down
On "The Smoot Farm," 'bout four mile from
town—
On "The Smoot Farm"! Yes—an' the hired han'
'At worked there nen 'uz The Raggedy Man!—
Ain't he the beatin'est Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man's so good an' kind
He'll be our "horsey," an' "haw" an' mind
Ever'thing 'at you make him do—
An' won't run off—'less you want him to!
I drived him wunst way down our lane
An' he got skeered, when it 'menced to rain,
An' ist rared up an' squealed and run
Purt' nigh away!—an' it's all in fun!
Nen he skeered *ag'in* at a' old tin can . . .
Whoa! y' old runaway Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes,
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers the'rselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,

'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann!
Er Ma, er Pa, er The Raggedy Man!
  Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?
    Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' wunst, when The Raggedy Man come late,
An' pigs ist root' thue the garden-gate,
He 'tend like the pigs 'uz *bears* an' said,
"Old Bear-shooter'll shoot 'em dead!"
An' race' an' chase' 'em, an' they'd ist run
When he pint his hoe at 'em like it's a gun
An' go "Bang!—Bang!" nen 'tend he stan'
An' load up his gun ag'in! Raggedy Man!
  He's an old Bear-shooter Raggedy Man!
    Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' sometimes The Raggedy Man lets on
We're little *prince*-children, an' old King's gone
To git more money, an' lef' us there—
And *Robbers* is ist thick ever'where;
An' nen—ef we all won't cry, fer *shore*—
The Raggedy Man he'll come and "'splore
The Castul-halls," an' steal the "gold"—
An' steal *us,* too, an' grab an' hold
An' pack us off to his old "Cave"!—An'
  Haymow's the "cave" o' The Raggedy Man!—
    Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time, when he
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,
Says "When you're big like your Pa is,
Air *you* go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows?"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

OUR HIRED GIRL

OUR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;
An' she can cook best things to eat!
She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,
An' pours in somepin' 'at's good an' sweet;
An' nen she salts it all on top
With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop
An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,
In th' old cook-stove, so's 'twon't slop
An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so
It's custard-pie, first thing you know!
An' nen she'll say,
"Clear out o' my way!
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!
Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!
Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,
An' says folks got to walk the chalk
When *she's* around, er wisht they had!
I play out on our porch an' talk
To Th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;
An' he says, *"Whew!"* an' nen leans on
His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes,

"Our hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann"

An' sniffs all 'round an' says, "I swawn!
  Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,
  It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!"
    An' nen *he'll* say,
    "Clear out o' my way!
  They's time fer work, an' time fer play!
    Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!
    Er she cain't git no cookin' done!"

Wunst our hired girl, when she
  Got the supper, an' we all et,
An' it wuz night, an' Ma an' me
  An' Pa went wher' the "Social" met,—
An' nen when we come home, an' see
A light in the kitchen door, an' we
  Heerd a maccordeun, Pa says, "Lan'-
O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?"
  An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabuth Ann
  Wuz parchin' corn fer The Raggedy Man!
    Better say,
    "Clear out o' the way!
  They's time fer work, an' time fer play!
    Take the hint, an' run, child, run!
    Er we cain't git no courtin' done!"

THE BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM

THE Boy lives on our Farm, he's not
Afeard o' horses none!
An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,
Er rack, er pace, er run.
Sometimes he drives *two* horses, when
He comes to town an' brings
A wagonful o' 'taters nen,
An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—
An' when you drive er hitch,
The *right* un's a "near horse," I guess,
Er "off"—I don't know which.—
The Boy lives on our Farm, he told
Me, too, 'at he can see,
By lookin' at their teeth, how old
A horse is, to a T!

I'd be the gladdest boy alive
Ef I knowed much as that,
An' could stand up like him an' drive,
An' ist push back my hat,
Like he comes skallyhootin' through
Our alley, with one arm
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—
The Boy lives on our Farm!

SONG OF THE BULLET

IT whizzed and whistled along the blurred
And red-blent ranks; and it nicked the star
Of an epaulette, as it snarled the word—
War!

On it sped—and the lifted wrist
Of the ensign-bearer stung, and straight
Dropped at his side as the word was hissed—
Hate!

On went the missile—smoothed the blue
Of a jaunty cap and the curls thereof,
Cooing, soft as a dove might do—
Love!

Sang!—sang on!—sang hate—sang war—
Sang love, in sooth, till it needs must cease,
Hushed in the heart it was questing for.—
Peace!

CHRISTMAS GREETING

A WORD of Godspeed and good cheer
To all on earth, or far or near,
Or friend or foe, or thine or mine—
In echo of the voice divine,
Heard when the Star bloomed forth and lit
The world's face, with God's smile on it.

UNCLE WILLIAM'S PICTURE

UNCLE WILLIAM, last July,
Had his picture took.
"Have it done, of course," says I,
"Jes' the way you look!"
(All dressed up, he was, fer the
Barbecue and jubilee
The old settlers helt.) So he—
Last he had it took.

Lide she'd coaxed and begged and pled,
Sence her mother went;
But he'd cough and shake his head
At all argyment;
Mebby clear his th'oat and say,
"What's *my* likeness 'mount to, hey,
Now with *Mother* gone away
From us, like she went?"

But we projicked round, tel we
Got it figgered down
How we'd git him, Lide and me,
Drivin' into town;

Bragged how well he looked and fleshed
Up around the face, and freshed
With the morning air; and breshed
  His coat-collar down.

All so providential! W'y,
  Now he's dead and gone,
Picture 'pears so lifelike I
  Want to start him on
Them old tales he ust to tell,
And old talks so sociable,
And old songs he sung so well—
  'Fore his voice was gone!

Face is sad to *Lide,* and they's
  Sorrow in the eyes—
Kisses it sometimes, and lays
  It away and cries.
I smooth down her hair, and 'low
He is happy, anyhow,
Bein' there with Mother now,—
  Smile, and wipe my eyes.

ERASMUS WILSON

'RAS WILSON, I respect you, 'cause
You're common, like you allus was
Afore you went to town and s'prised
The world by gittin' "reckonized,"
And yit perservin', as I say,
Your common hoss-sense ev'ryway!
And when that name o' yourn occurs
On hand-bills, er in newspapers,
Er letters writ by friends 'at ast
About you, same as in the past,
And neghbors and relations 'low
You're out o' the tall timber now,
And "gittin' thare" about as spry's
The next!—as *I say,* when my eyes,
Er ears, lights on your name, I mind
The first time 'at I come to find
You—and my Rickollection yells,
Jest jubilunt as old sleigh-bells—
"'Ras Wilson! Say! Hold up! and shake
A paw, fer old acquaintance sake!"

My *Rickollection,* more'n like,
Hain't overly too apt to strike
The what's-called "cultchurd public eye"
As wisdum of the deepest dye,—
And yit my *Rickollection* makes
So blame lots fewer bad mistakes,
Regardin' human-natur' and
The fellers 'at I've shook theyr hand,
Than my *best jedgemunt's* done, the day
I've met 'em—'fore I got away,—
'At—Well, 'Ras Wilson, let me grip
Your hand in warmest pardnership!

Dad-burn ye!—Like to jest haul back
A' old flat-hander, jest che-whack!
And take you 'twixt the shoulders, say,
Sometime you're lookin' t'other way!—
Er, maybe whilse you're speakin' to
A whole blame Court-house-full o' 'thu-
Syastic friends, I'd like to jest
Come in-like and break up the nest
Afore you hatched another cheer,
And say: "'Ras, *I* can't stand hitched here
All night—ner wouldn't ef I could!—
But Little Bethel Neghborhood,
You ust to live at, 's sent some word
Fer you, ef ary chance occurred
To git it to ye,—so ef you
Kin stop, I'm waitin' fer ye to!"

You're common, as I said afore—
You're common, yit oncommon *more*,—
You allus kindo' 'pear, to me,
What all mankind had ort to be—
Jest *natchurl,* and the more hurraws
You git, the less you know the cause—
Like as ef God Hisse'f stood by,
Where best on earth hain't half knee-high,
And *seein'* like, and knowin' *He*
'S the Only Grate Man really,
You're jest content to size your hight
With any feller man's in sight.—
And even then they's scrubs, like me,
Feels stuck-up, in your company!

Like now:—I want to go with you
Plum out o' town a mile er two
Clean past the Fair-ground whare's some
hint
O' pennyrile er peppermint,
And bottom-lands, and timber thick
Enugh to sorto' shade the crick!
I want to *see* you—want to set
Down somers, whare the grass hain't wet,
And kindo' *breathe* you, like puore air—
And taste o' your tobacker thare,
And talk and chaw! Talk o' the birds
We've knocked with cross-bows.—After-
wards
Drop, mayby, into some dispute
'Bout "pomgrannies," er cal'mus-root—

And how *they* growed, and *whare?*—on tree
Er vine?—Who's best boy-memory!—
And wasn't it *gingsang,* insted
O' cal'mus-root, growed like you said?—
Er how to tell a coon-track from
A mussrat's;—er how milksick come—
Er ef *cows* brung it?—Er why now
We never see no "muley"-cow—
Ner "frizzly"-chicken—ner no "clay-
Bank" mare—ner nothin' thataway!—
And what's come o' the *yeller*-core
Old wortermelons?—hain't no more.—
Tomattusus, the same—all *red-*
Uns nowadays—All past joys fled—
Each and all jest gone k-whizz!
Like our days o' childhood is!

Dag-gone it, 'Ras! they hain't no friend,
It 'pears-like, left to comperhend
Sich things as these but you, and see
How dratted sweet they air to me!
But you, 'at's loved 'em allus, and
Kin sort 'em out and understand
'Em, same as the fine books you've read,
And all fine thoughts you've writ, er said,
Er worked out, through long nights o' rain,
And doubts and fears, and hopes, again,
As bright as morning when she broke,—
You know a tear-drop from a joke!
And so, 'Ras Wilson, stop and shake
A paw, fer old acquaintance sake!

BACK FROM TOWN

OLD friends allus is the best,
Halest-like and heartiest:
Knowed us first, and don't allow
We're so blame much better now!
They was standin' at the bars
When we grabbed "the kivvered kyars"
And lit out fer town, to make
Money—and that old mistake!

We thought then the world we went
Into beat "The Settlement,"
And the friends 'at we'd make there
Would beat any anywhere!—
And they *do*—fer that's their biz:
They beat all the friends they is—
'Cept the raal old friends like you
'At staid at home, like *I'd* ort to!

W'y, of all the good things yit
I ain't shet of, is to quit
Business, and git back to sheer
These old comforts waitin' here—

These old friends; and these old hands
'At a feller understands;
These old winter nights, and old
Young-folks chased in out the cold!

Sing "Hard Times'll come ag'in
No More!" and neighbers all jine in!
Here's a feller come from town
Wants that-air old fiddle down
From the chimbly!—Git the floor
Cleared fer one cowtillion more!—
It's poke the kitchen fire, says he,
And shake a friendly leg with me!

TUGG MARTIN

I

TUGG MARTIN'S tough.—No doubt o' that!
And down there at
The camp he come from word's bin sent
Advisin' this-here Settle-ment
To kind o' *humor* Tugg, and not
To git him hot.—
Jest pass his imperfections by,
And he's as good as pie!

II

They claim he's *wanted* back there.—Yit
The officers they mostly quit
Insistin' when
They notice Tugg's so *back'ard,* and
Sort o' gives 'em to understand
He'd ruther not!—A Deputy
(The slickest one you ever see!)
Tackled him *last*—"disguisin' then,"
As Tugg says, "as *a gentleman*"!—
You'd ort 'o hear *Tugg* tell it—*My!*
I thought I'd *die!*

III

The way it wuz:—Tugg and the rest
The boys wuz jest
A-kind o' gittin' thawed out, down
At "Guss's Place," fur-end o' town,
One night,—when, first we knowed,
Some feller rode
Up in a buggy at the door,
And hollered fer some one to come
And fetch him some
Red-licker out—And whirped and swore
That colt he drove wuz *"Thompson's"*—shore!

IV

Guss went out, and come in ag'in
And filled a pint and tuk it out—
Stayed quite a spell—then peeked back in,
Half-hid-like where the light wuz dim,
And jieuked his head
At Tugg and said,—
"Come out a minute—here's a gent
Wants you to take a drink with him."

V

Well—Tugg laid down his cards and went—
In fact, *we all*
Got up, you know,
Startin' to go—

When in reels Guss ag'inst the wall,
As white as snow,
Gaspin',—*"He's tuk Tugg!—Wher' 's my gun?"*
And-sir, outside we heerd
The hoss snort and kick up his heels
Like he wuz skeerd,
And then the buggy-wheels
Scrape—and then *Tugg's* voice hollerun,—
"I'm bested!—Good-by, fellers!" . . . 'Peared
S' all-fired suddent,
Nobody couldn't
Jest git it fixed,—tel hoss and man,
Buggy and Tugg, off through the dark
Went like the devil beatin' tan-
Bark!

VI

What *could* we do? . . . We filed back to
The bar: And Guss jest *looked* at us,
And we looked back "The same as you,"
Still *sayin'* nothin'—And the sap
It stood in every eye,
And every hat and cap
Went off, as we teched glasses solemnly,
And Guss says-he:
"Ef it's 'good-by' with Tugg, fer *shore,*—I say
God bless him!—Er ef they
Ain't railly no *need* to pray,
I'm not *reniggin'*—board's the play,
And here's God bless him, anyway!"

VII

It must 'a' bin an hour er so
We all set there,
Talkin' o' pore
Old Tugg, you know,
'At never wuz ketched up before,—
When—all slow-like—the door-
Knob turned—and Tugg come shamblin' in
Handcuffed!—'at's what he wuz, I swear!—
Yit smilin', like he hadn't bin
Away at all! And when we ast him where
The *Deputy* wuz at,—"I don't know *where,*"
Tugg said,—
"All *I* know is—he's dead."

TO RUDYARD KIPLING

TO do some worthy deed of charity
In secret and then have it found out by
Sheer accident, held gentle Elia—
That—that was the best thing beneath the sky!
Confirmed in part, yet somewhat differing—
(Grant that his gracious wraith will pardon me
If impious!)—I think a better thing
Is: being found out when one strives to be.

So, Poet and Romancer—old as young,
And wise as artless—masterful as mild,—
If there be sweet in any song I've sung,
'Twas savored for thy palate, O my Child!
For thee the lisping of the children all—
For thee the youthful voices of old years—
For thee all chords untamed or musical—
For thee the laughter, and for thee the tears.

And thus, borne to me o'er the seas between
Thy land and mine, thy Song of certain wing
Circles above me in the "pure serene"
Of our high heaven's vast o'er-welcoming;

While, packeted with joy and thankfulness,
And fair hopes many as the stars that shine,
And bearing all love's loyal messages,
Mine own goes homing back to thee and thine.

DECORATION DAY ON THE PLACE

IT'S lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a *Sund'y-day,* to me,
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Yit, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the air,
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

They say, though, Decoration Days is giner'ly observed
'Most *ev'rywheres*—espeshally by soldier-boys that's served.—
But me and Mother's never went—we seldom git away,—
In p'int o' fact, we're *allus* home on *Decoration Day.*

They say the old boys marches through the streets in colum's grand,
A-follerin' the old war-tunes they're playin' on the band—
And citizuns all jinin' in—and little childern, too—
All marchin', under shelter of the old Red White and Blue.—

With roses! roses! roses!—ev'rybody in the town!—
And crowds o' little girls in white, jest fairly loaded down!—

Oh! don't THE BOYS know it, from theyr camp
acrost the hill?—
Don't they see theyr com'ards comin' and the old
flag wavin' still?

Oh! can't they hear the bugul and the rattle of the
drum?—
Ain't they no way under heavens they can rickollect
us some?
Ain't they no way we can coax 'em, through the
roses, jest to say
They know that ev'ry day on earth's theyr Decora-
tion Day?

We've tried that—me and Mother,—whare Elias
takes his rest,
In the orchurd—in his uniform, and hands acrost
his brest,
And the flag he died fer, smilin' and a-ripplin' in the
breeze
Above his grave—and over that,—*the robin in the
trees!*

And *yit* it's lonesome—lonesome!—It's a *Sund'y-
day,* to *me,*
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Still, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin'
in the air,
On ev'ry soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

THEY'S a predjudice allus 'twixt country and
town
Which I wisht in my hart wasent so.
You take *city* people, jest square up and down,
And they're mighty good people to know:
And whare's better people a-livin', to-day,
Than us in the *country?*—Yit good
As both of us is, we're divorsed, you might say,
And won't compermise when we could!

Now as nigh into town fer yer Pap, ef you please,
Is what's called the sooburbs.—Fer thare
You'll at least ketch a whiff of the breeze and a sniff
Of the breth of wild-flowrs ev'rywhare.
They's room fer the childern to play, and grow,
too—
And to roll in the grass, er to climb
Up a tree and rob nests, like they *ortent* to do,
But they'll do *anyhow* ev'ry time!

My Son-in-law said, when he lived in the town,
He jest natchurly pined, night and day,
Fer a sight of the woods, er a acre of ground
Whare the trees wasent all cleared away!

And he says to me onc't, whilse a-visitin' us
On the farm, "It's not strange, I declare,
That we can't coax you folks, without raisin' a fuss,
To come to town, visitin' thare!"

And says I, "Then git back whare you sorto'
belong—
And *Madaline,* too,—and yer three
Little childern," says I, "that don't know a bird-
song,
Ner a hawk from a chicky-dee-dee!
Git back," I-says-I, "to the blue of the sky
And the green of the fields, and the shine
Of the sun, with a laugh in yer voice and yer eye
As harty as Mother's and mine!"

Well—long-and-short of it,—he's compermised
some—
He's moved in the sooburbs.—And now
They don't haf to coax, when they want us to come,
'Cause we turn in and go *anyhow!*
Fer thare—well, they's room fer the songs and
purfume
Of the grove and the old orchurd-ground,
And they's room fer the childern out thare, and
they's room
Fer theyr Gran'pap to waller 'em round!

THE FIRST BLUEBIRD

JEST rain and snow! and rain again!
And dribble! drip! and blow!
Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then—
Some more rain and snow!

This morning I was 'most afeard
To *wake* up—when, I jing!
I seen the sun shine out and heerd
The first bluebird of Spring!—
Mother she'd raised the winder some;—
And in acrost the orchurd come,
Soft as a' angel's wing,
A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,
Too sweet for anything!

The winter's shroud was rent apart—
The sun bu'st forth in glee,—
And when *that bluebird* sung, my hart
Hopped out o' bed with me!

LINES TO
PERFESSER JOHN CLARK RIDPATH

A. M., LL. D. T-Y-TY

[*Cumposed by A Old Friend of the Fambily sence 'way back in the Forties, when they Settled nigh Fillmore, Putnam County, this State, whare John was borned and growed up, you might say, like the wayside flower.*]

YOUR neghbors in the country, whare you come
from, hain't fergot!—
We knowed you even better than your own-self, like
as not.
We profissied your runnin'-geers 'ud stand a soggy
load
And pull her, purty stiddy, up a mighty rocky road:
We been a-watchin' your career sence you could
write your name—
But way you writ it *first,* I'll say, was jest a burnin'
shame!—
Your "J. C." in the copy-book, and "Ridpath"—
mercy-sakes!—

Quiled up and tide in dubble bows, lookt like a nest
o' snakes!—
But *you* could read it, I *suppose,* and kindo' gloted on
A-bein' *"J. C. Ridpath"* when *we* only called you *"John."*

But you'd work's well as fool, and what you had to do was *done:*
We've watched you at the wood-pile—not the *wood-shed*—wasent none,—
And snow and sleet, and haulin', too, and lookin' after stock,
And milkin', nights, and feedin' pigs,—then turnin' back the clock,
So's you could set up studyin' your 'Rethmatic, and fool
Your Parents, whilse a-piratin' your way through winter school!
And I've heerd tell—from your own folks—you've set and baked your face
A-readin' Plutark Slives all night by that old fi-er-place.—
Yit, 'bout them times, the blackboard, onc't, had on it, I *de*-clare,
"Yours truly, *J. Clark* Ridpath."—And the teacher—left it thare!

And they was other symptums, too, that pinted, plane as day,
To nothin' short of *College!*—and *one* was the lovin' way
Your mother had of cheerin' you to efforts brave and strong,
And puttin' more faith in you, as you needed it along:
She'd pat you on the shoulder, er she'd grab you by the hands,
And *laugh* sometimes, er *cry* sometimes.—They's few that understands
Jest *what* theyr mother's drivin at when they act thataway;—
But I'll say this fer *you,* John-Clark,—you answered, night and day,
To ev'ry trust and hope of hers—and half your College fame
Was battled fer and won fer her and glory of her name.

The likes of *you* at *College!* But you went thare. How you paid
Your way nobody's astin'—but you *worked,*—you hain't afraid,—
Your *clothes* was, more'n likely, kindo' out o' style, perhaps,
And not as snug and warm as some 'at hid the other chaps;—

But when it come to *Intullect*—they tell me yourn
was dressed
A *leetle* mite *superber*-like than any of the rest!
And thare you *stayed*—and thare you've made your
rickord, fare and square—
Tel *now* it's *Fame* 'at writes your name, approvin',
ev'rywhare—
Not *jibblets* of it, nuther,—but all John Clark
Ridpath, set
Plum at the dashboard of the whole-endurin'
Alfabet!

ELIZABETH

MAY 1, 1891

I

ELIZABETH! Elizabeth!
The first May-morning whispereth
Thy gentle name in every breeze
That lispeth through the young-leaved trees,
New raimented in white and green
Of bloom and leaf to crown thee queen;—
And, as in odorous chorus, all
The orchard-blossoms sweetly call
Even as a singing voice that saith,
Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

II

Elizabeth! Lo, lily-fair,
In deep, cool shadows of thy hair,
Thy face maintaineth its repose.—
Is it, O sister of the rose,
So better, sweeter, blooming thus

Than in this briery world with us?—
  Where frost o'ertaketh, and the breath
  Of biting winter harrieth
With sleeted rains and blighting snows
    All fairest blooms—Elizabeth!

III

Nay, then!—So reign, Elizabeth,
Crowned, in thy May-day realm of death!
Put forth the scepter of thy love
In every star-tipped blossom of
The grassy dais of thy throne!
Sadder are we, thus left alone,
But gladder they that thrill to see
Thy mother's rapture, greeting thee.
  Bereaved are we by life—not death—
    Elizabeth! Elizabeth!

SONGS OF A LIFE-TIME

MRS. SARAH T. BOLTON'S POEMS

SONGS of a Life-Time—with the Singer's head
A silvery glory shining midst the green
Of laurel-leaves that bind a brow serene.
And godlike as was ever garlanded.—
So seems *her* glory who herein has wed
Melodious Beauty to the strong of mien
And kingly Speech—made kinglier by this queen
In lilied cadence voiced and raimented.
Songs of a Life-Time: by your own sweet stress
Of singing were ye loved of bygone years—
As through our day ye are, and shall be hence,
Till *fame divine* marks your melodiousness
And on the Singer's lips, with smiles and tears,
Seals there the kiss of love and reverence.

AN OLD MAN'S MEMORY

THE delights of our childhood is soon passed
away,
And our gloryus youth it departs,—
And yit, dead and burried, they's blossoms of May
Ore theyr medderland graves in our harts.
So, friends of my barefooted days on the farm,
Whether truant in city er not,
God prosper you same as He's prosperin' me,
Whilse your past hain't despised er fergot.

Oh! they's nothin', at morn, that's as grand unto me
As the glorys of Natchur so fare,—
With the Spring in the breeze, and the bloom in the
trees,
And the hum of the bees ev'rywhare!
The green in the woods, and the birds in the boughs,
And the dew spangled over the fields;
And the bah of the sheep and the bawl of the cows
And the call from the house to your meals!

Then ho! fer your brekfast! and ho! fer the toil
That waiteth alike man and beast!
Oh! it's soon with my team I'll be turnin' up soil,
Whilse the sun shoulders up in the East

Ore the tops of the ellums and beeches and oaks,
To smile his Godspeed on the plow,
And the furry and seed, and the Man in his need,
And the joy of the swet of his brow!

US FARMERS IN THE COUNTRY

US farmers in the country, as the seasons go
and come,
Is purty much like other folks,—we're apt to
grumble some!
The Spring's too back'ard fer us, er too for'ard—
ary one—
We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er
none!
The thaw's set in too suddent; er the frost's stayed
in the soil
Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is
bound to spoil!
The weather's eether most too mild, er too out-
rageous rough,
And altogether too much rain, er not half rain
enugh!

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane
enugh to see:
It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you
and me
And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine er
rain,
And post 'em when to shet her off, er let her on
again!

And yit I'd ruther, after all—consider'n' other
chores
I' got on hands, a-tendin' both to my affares and
yours—
I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-rulin' things up
thare,
And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude
and prayer.

ON A DEAD BABE

FLY away! thou heavenly one!—
I do hail thee on thy flight!
Sorrow? thou hath tasted none—
Perfect joy is yourn by right.
Fly away! and bear our love
To thy kith and kin above!

I can tetch thy finger-tips
Ca'mly, and bresh back the hair
From thy forr'ed with my lips,
And not leave a tear-drop thare.—
Weep fer *Tomps and Ruth*—and
me—
But I can not weep fer *thee*.

"MYLO JONES'S WIFE"

"MYLO JONES'S wife" was all
I heerd, mighty near, last Fall—
Visitun relations down
T'other side of Morgantown!
Mylo Jones's wife she does
This and that, and "those" and "thus"!—
Can't bide babies in her sight—
Ner no childern, day and night,
Whoopin' round the premises—
Ner no nothin' else, I guess!

Mylo Jones's wife she 'lows
She's the boss of her own house!—
Mylo—consequences is—
Stays whare things seem *some* like *his,*—
Uses, mostly, with the stock—
Coaxin' "Old Kate" not to balk,
Ner kick hoss-flies' branes out, ner
Act, I s'pose, so much like *her!*
Yit the wimern-folks tells you
She's *perfection.*—Yes they do!

Mylo's wife she says she's found
Home hain't home with *men-folks* round
When they's work like *hern* to do—

Picklin' pears and *butcher'n'*, too,
And a-render'n' lard, and then
Cookin' fer a pack o' men
To come trackin' up the flore
She's scrubbed *tel* she'll scrub no *more!*—
Yit she'd keep things clean ef they
Made her scrub tel Jedgmunt Day!

Mylo Jones's wife she sews
Carpet-rags and patches clothes
Jest year *in* and *out!*—and yit
Whare's the livin' use of it?
She asts Mylo that.—And he
Gits back whare he'd ruther be,
With his team;—jest *plows*—and don't
Never sware—like some folks won't!
Think ef *he'd cut loose,* I gum!
'D he'p his heavenly chances some!

Mylo's wife don't see no use,
Ner no reason ner excuse
Fer his pore relations to
Hang round like they allus do!
Thare 'bout onc't a year—and *she*—
She jest *ga'nts* 'em, folks tells me,
On spiced pears!—Pass Mylo one,
He says "No, he don't chuse none!"
Workin' men like Mylo they
'D ort to have *meat* ev'ry day!

Dad-burn Mylo Jones's wife!
Ruther rake a blame case-knife
'Crost my wizzen than to see
Sich a womern rulin' *me!*—
Ruther take and turn in and
Raise a fool mule-colt by hand!
Mylo, though—od-rot the man!—
Jest keeps ca'm—like some folks *can*—
And 'lows such as her, I s'pose,
Is *Man's he'pmeet!*—Mercy knows!

A PEN-PICTUR' OF A CERT'IN FRIVVOLUS OLD MAN

MOST ontimely old man yit!
'Pear-like sometimes he jest *tries*
His fool-self, and takes the bitt
In his teeth and jest de-fies
All perpryties!—Lay and swet
Doin' *nothin'*—only jest
Sorto' speckillatun on
Whare old summer-times is gone,
And 'bout things that he loved best
When a youngster! Heerd him say
Spring-times made him thataway—
Speshully on *Sund'ys*—when
Sun shines out and in again,
And the lonesome old hens they
Git off under the old kern-
Bushes, and in deep concern
Talk-like to theyrselves, and scratch
Kindo' absunt-minded, jest
Like theyr thoughts was fur away
In some neghbor's gyarden-patch
Folks has tended keerfullest!
Heerd the old man dwell on these
Idys time and time again!—
Heerd him claim that orchurd-trees
Bloomin', put the mischief in

His old hart sometimes that bad
And owdacious that he *"had*
To break loose *some*way," says he,
"Ornry as I ust to be!"

Heerd him say one time—when I
Was a sorto' standin' by,
And the air so still and clear,
Heerd the bell fer church clean here!—
Said: "Ef I could climb and set
On the old three-cornerd rail
Old home-place, nigh Maryette',
Swap my soul off, hide and tale!"
And-sir! blame ef tear and laugh
Didn't ketch him half and half!
"Oh!" he says, "to wake and be
Barefoot, in the airly dawn
In the pastur'!—thare," says he,
"Standin' whare the cow's slep' on
The cold, dewy grass that's got
Print of her jest steamy hot
Fer to warm a feller's heels
In a while!—How good it feels!
Sund'y!—Country!—Morning!—Hear
Nothin' but the *silunce*—see
Nothin' but green woods and clear
Skies and unwrit poetry
By the acre! . . . Oh!" says he,
"What's this voice of mine?—to seek
To speak out, and yit *can't* speak!

"Think!—the lazyest of days"—
Takin' his contrairyest leap,
He went on,—"git up, er sleep—
Er whilse feedin', watch the haze
Dancin' crost the wheat,—and keep
My pipe goin' laisurely—
Puff and whiff as pleases me,—
Er I'll leave a trail of smoke
Through *the house!*—no one'll say
'Throw that nasty thing away!'
'Pear-like nothin' sacerd's broke,
Goin' barefoot ef I chuse!—
I *have fiddled;*—and dug bait
And *went fishin';*—pitched hoss-shoes—
Whare they couldn't see us from
The main road.—And I've *beat* some.
I've set round and had my joke
With the thrashers at the barn—
And I've swapped 'em yarn fer yarn!—
Er I've he'pped the childern poke
Fer hens'-nests—agged on a match
'Twixt the boys, to watch 'em scratch
And paw round and rip and tare,
And bu'st buttons and pull hair
To theyr rompin' harts' content—
And me jest a-settin' thare
Hatchin' out more devilment!

"What you s'pose now ort to be
Done with sich a man?" says he—
"Sich a fool-old-man as me!"

THOUGHTS ON A PORE JOKE

I LIKE fun—and I like jokes
'Bout as well as most o' folks!—
Like my joke, and like my fun;—
But a joke, I'll state right here,
'S got some p'int—er I don't keer
Fer no joke that hain't got none.—
I hain't got no use, I'll say,
Fer a *pore* joke, anyway!

F'r instunce, now, when *some* folks gits
To relyin' on theyr wits,
Ten to one they git too smart
And *spile* it all, right at the start!
Feller wants to jest go slow
And do his *thinkin'* first, you know.
'F I can't think up somepin' good,
I set still and chaw my cood!
'F you *think* nothin'—jest keep on,
But don't *say* it—er you're gone!

EVAGENE BAKER

Who Was Dyin' of Dred Consumtion as These Lines Was Penned by a True Friend

PORE afflicted Evagene!
Whilse the woods is fresh and green,
And the birds on ev'ry hand
Sings in rapture sweet and grand,—
Thou, of all the joyus train,
Art bedridden, and in pain
Sich as only them can cherish
Who, like flowrs, is first to perish!

When the neghbors brought the word
She was down, the folks inferred
It was jest a cold she'd caught,
Dressin' thinner than she'd ort
Fer the frolicks and the fun
Of the dancin' that she'd done
'Fore the Spring was flush er ary
Blossom on the peach er cherry.

But, last Sund'y, her request
Fer the Church's prayers was jest
Rail hart-renderin' to hear!—
Many was the silunt tear

And the tremblin' sigh, to show
She was dear to us below
  On this earth—and *dearer,* even,
  When we thought of her a-leavin'!

Sisters prayed, and coted from
Genesis to Kingdom-come
Provin' of her title clear
To the mansions.—"Even *her,*"
They claimed, "might be saved, *someway,*
Though she'd danced, and played crowkay,
  And wrought on her folks to git her
  Fancy shoes that never fit her!"

Us to pray fer *Evagene!*—
With her hart as puore and clean
As a rose is after rain
When the sun comes out again!—
What's the use to pray fer *her?*
She don't need no prayin' fer!—
  Needed, all her life, more *playin'*
  Than she ever needed prayin'!

I jest thought of all she'd been
Sence her *mother* died, and when
She turned in and done *her* part—
All *her* cares on that child-hart!—
Thought of years she'd slaved—and had
Saved the farm—danced and was glad . . .
  Mayby Him who marks the sporry
  Will smooth down her wings to-morry!

ON ANY ORDENARY MAN IN A HIGH STATE OF LAUGHTURE AND DELIGHT

AS it's give' me to perceive,
I most cert'in'y believe
When a man's jest glad plum through,
God's pleased with him, same as you.

THE HOODOO

OWNED a pair o' skates onc't.—Traded
Fer 'em,—stropped 'em on and waded
Up and down the crick, a-waitin'
Tel she'd freeze up fit fer skatin'.
Mildest winter I remember—
More like Spring- than Winter-weather!—
Didn't *frost* tel 'bout December—
Git up airly, ketch a feather
Of it, mayby, 'crost the winder—
Sunshine swinge it like a cinder!

Well—I *waited*—and *kep'* waitin'!
Couldn't see my money's wo'th in
Them-air skates, and was no skatin'
Ner no hint o' ice ner nothin'!
So, one day—along in airly
Spring—I swapped 'em off—and barely
Closed the dicker, 'fore the weather
Natchurly jes' slipped the ratchet,
And crick—tail-race—all together,
Froze so tight, cat couldn't scratch it!

CUORED O' SKEERIN'

'LISH, you rickollect that-air
Dad-burn skittish old bay mare
Was no livin' with!—'at skeerd
'T ever'thing she seed er heerd!—
Th'owed 'Ves' Anders, and th'owed Pap,
First he straddled her—*k-slap!*—
And Izory—well!—th'owed *her*
Hain't no tellin' jest how fur!—
Broke her collar-bone—and might
Jest 'a' kilt the gyrl outright!

Course I'd heerd 'em make their boast
She th'ow any feller, 'most,
Ever topped her! S' I, "I know
One man 'at she'll never th'ow!"
So I rid her in to mill,
And, jest comin' round the hill,
Met a *traction-engine!*—Ort
Jest 'a' heerd that old mare snort,
And lay back her yeers, and see
Her a-tryin' to th'ow *me!*
Course I never said a word,
But thinks I, "My ladybird,
You'll git cuored, right here and now,
Of yer dy-does anyhow!"

So I stuck her—tel she'd jest
Done her very level best;
Then I slides off—strips the lines
Over her fool-head, and finds
Me a little saplin'-gad,
'Side the road:—And there we had
Our own fun!—jest wore her out!
Mounted her, and faced about,
And jest made her *nose* that-air
Little traction-engine there!

OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I HAVE jest about decided
It'd keep a *town-boy* hoppin'
Fer to work all winter, choppin'
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like,
Wouldn't break!—and I wuz skeerd-like
Clean on into *Feb'uary!*
Nothin' ever made me madder
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'
On a' extry forestick, sayin',
"Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!"

"COON-DOG WESS"

"COON-DOG WESS"—he allus went
'Mongst us here by that-air name.
Moved in this-here Settlement
From next county—he laid claim,—
Lived down in the bottoms—whare
Ust to be some coons in thare!—

In nigh Clayton's, next the crick,—
Mind old Billy ust to say
Coons in thare was jest that thick,
He'p him corn-plant any day!—
And, in rostneer-time, be then
Aggin' him to plant again!

Well,—In Spring o' '67,
This-here "Coon-dog Wess" he come—
Fetchin' 'long 'bout forty-'leven
Ornriest-lookin' hounds, I gum!
Ever mortul-man laid eyes
On sence dawn o' Christian skies!

Wife come traipsin' at the rag-
Tag-and-bobtail of the crowd,
Dogs and childern, with a bag

Corn-meal and some side-meat,—*Proud*
And as *independunt*—*My!*-
Yit a mild look in her eye.

Well—this "Coon-dog Wess" he jest
Moved in that-air little pen
Of a pole-shed, aidgin' west
On "The Slues o' Death," called then.—
Otter- and mink-hunters ust
To camp thare 'fore game vam-moosd.

Abul-bodied man,—and lots
Call fer *choppers*—and fer hands
To git *cross-ties out.*—But what's
Work to sich as understands
Ways appinted and is hence
Under special providence?—

"Coon-dog Wess's" holts was *hounds*
And *coon-huntin';* and he knowed
His own range, and stayed in bounds
And left work fer them 'at showed
Talents fer it—same as his
Gifts regardin' coon-dogs is.

Hounds of ev'ry mungerl breed
Ever whelped on earth!—Had these
Yeller kind, with punkin-seed
Marks above theyr eyes—and fleas
Both to sell and keep!—Also
These-here *lop-yeerd* hounds, you know.—

Yes-and *brindle* hounds—and long,
Ga'nt hounds, with them eyes they' got
So blame *sorry,* it seems wrong,
'Most, to kick 'em as to not!
Man, though, wouldn't dast, I guess,
Kick a hound fer "Coon-dog Wess"!

'Tended to his own affairs
Stric'ly;—made no brags,—and yit
You could see 'at them hounds' cares
'Peared like *his,*—and he'd 'a' fit
Fer 'em, same as wife er child!—
Them facts made folks rickonciled,

Sorto', fer to let him be
And not pester him. And then
Word begin to spread 'at he
Had brung in as high as ten
Coon-pelts in one night—and yit
Didn't 'pear to boast of it!

Neghborhood made some complaints
'Bout them plague-gone hounds at night
Howlin' fit to wake the saints,
Clean from dusk tel plum daylight!
But to "Coon-dog Wess" them-thare
Howls was "music in the air"!

Fetched his pelts to Gilson's Store—
Newt he shipped fer him, and said,
Sence *he'd* cooned thare, he'd shipped more

Than three hundred pelts!—"By **Ned!**
Git shet of my *store,"* Newt says,
"I'd go in with 'Coon-dog Wess'!"

And the feller 'peared to be
Makin' best and most he could
Of his rale prospairity:—
Bought some household things—and *good,*—
Likewise, wagon-load onc't come
From wharever he'd moved from.

But pore feller's huntin'-days,
'Bout them times, was glidin' past!—
Goes out onc't one night and *stays!*
. . . Neghbors they turned out, at last,
Headed by his wife and one
Half-starved hound—and search begun.

Boys said, that blame hound, he led
Searchin' party, 'bout a half-
Mile ahead, and bellerin', said,
Worse'n ary yearlin' calf!—
Tel, at last, come fur-off sounds
Like the howl of other hounds.

And-sir, shore enugh, them signs
Fetched 'em—in a' hour er two—
Whare the *pack* was;—and they finds
"Coon-dog Wess" *right thare;*—And you
Would admitted he was right
Stayin', as he had, *all night!*

Facts is, cuttin' down a tree,
The blame thing had sorto' fell
In a twist-like—*mercy me!*
And had ketched him.—Couldn't tell,
Wess said, *how* he'd managed—yit
He'd got both legs under it!

Fainted and come to, I s'pose,
'Bout a dozen times whilse they
Chopped him out!—And wife she froze
To him!—bresh his hair away
And smile cheerful'—only when
He'd faint.—Cry and kiss him *then.*

Had *his* nerve!—And nussed him through,—
Neghbors he'pped her—all she'd stand.—
Had a loom, and she could do
Carpet-weavin' railly grand!—
"'Sides," she ust to laugh and say,
"She'd have Wess, now, *night* and day!"

As fer *him,* he'd say, says-ee,
"I'm resigned to bein' lame:—
They was four coons up that tree,
And hounds got 'em, jest the same!"
'Peared like, one er two legs less
Never worried "Coon-Dog Wess"!

GOIN' TO THE FAIR

OLD STYLE

WHEN Me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair,
Ma borried Mizz Rollins-uz rigg to go there,
'Cause *our* buggy's *new,* an' Ma says, "Mercy-sake!
It wouldn't hold *half* the folks *she's* go' to take!"
An' she took Marindy, an' Jane's twins, an' Jo,
An' Aunty Van Meters-uz girls—an' old Slo'
Magee, 'at's so fat, come a-scrougin' in there,
When me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair!

The road's full o' loads-full 'ist ready to bu'st,
An' all hot, an' smokin' an' chokin' with dust;
The Wolffs an' their wagon, an' Brizentines, too—
An' horses 'ist r'ared when the toot-cars come through!
An' 'way from fur off we could hear the band play,
An' peoples all there 'u'd 'ist whoop an' hooray!
An' I stood on the dashboard, an' Pa boost' me there
'Most high as the fence, when we went to the Fair.

An' when we 'uz there an' inside, we could see
Wher' the flag's on a pole wher' a show's go' to be;
An' boys up in trees, an' the grea'-big balloon
'At didn't goned up a-tall, all afternoon!

An' a man in the crowd there gived money away—
An' Pa says *"he'd* ruther earn *his* by the day!"—
An' *he* gim-me some, an' says "ain't nothin' there
Too good fer his boy," when we went to the Fair!

Wisht The Raggedy Man wuz there, too!—but he
says,
"Don't talk fairs to *me,* child! I went to one;—
yes,—
An' they wuz a swing there ye rode—an' I rode,
An' a thing-um-a-jing 'at ye blowed—an' I blowed;
An' they wuz a game 'at ye played—an' I played,
An' a hitch in the same wher' ye paid—an' I paid;
An' they wuz *two* bad to one good peoples there—
Like *you* an' your *Pa* an' Ma went to the Fair!"

THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

O THE waiting in the watches of the night!
In the darkness, desolation, and contrition
and affright;
The awful hush that holds us shut away from all
delight:
The ever-weary memory that ever weary goes
Recounting ever over every aching loss it
knows—
The ever-weary eyelids gasping ever for repose—
In the dreary, weary watches of the night!

Dark—stifling dark—the watches of the night!
With tingling nerves at tension, how the blackness
flashes white
With spectral visitations smitten past the inner
sight!—
What shuddering sense of wrongs we've wrought
that may not be redressed—
Of tears we did not brush away—of lips we left
unpressed,
And hands that we let fall, with all their loyalty
unguessed!
Ah! the empty, empty watches of the night!

What solace in the watches of the night?—
What frailest staff of hope to stay—what faintest
shaft of light?
Do we *dream,* and dare *believe* it, that by never
weight of right
Of our own poor weak deservings, we shall win
the dawn at last—
Our famished souls find freedom from this
penance for the past,
In a faith that leaps and lightens from the gloom
that flees aghast—
Shall we survive the watches of the night?

One leads us through the watches of the night—
By the ceaseless intercession of our loved ones lost
to sight
He is with us through all trials, in His mercy and
His might;—
With our mothers there about Him, all our
sorrow disappears,
Till the silence of our sobbing is the prayer the
Master hears,
And His hand is laid upon us with the tenderness
of tears
In the waning of the watches of the night.

OSCAR C. McCULLOCH

INDIANAPOLIS, DECEMBER 12, 1891

WHAT would best please our friend, in token of
The sense of our great loss?—Our sighs and tears?
Nay, these he fought against through all his years,
Heroically voicing, high above
Grief's ceaseless minor, moaning like a dove,
The pæan triumphant that the soldier hears,
Scaling the walls of death, midst shouts and cheers,
The old Flag laughing in his eyes' last love.

Nay, then, to pleasure him were it not meet
To yield him bravely, as his fate arrives?—
Drape him in radiant roses, head and feet,
And be partakers, while his work survives,
Of his fair fame,—paying the tribute sweet
To all humanity—our nobler lives.

WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES

WINTER-TIME, er Summer-time,
Of late years I notice I'm,
Kind o' like, more subjec' to
What the *weather* is. Now, *you*
Folks 'at lives in *town,* I s'pose,
Thinks it's bully when it snows;
But the chap 'at chops and hauls
Yer wood fer ye, and then stalls,
And snapps tuggs and swingletrees,
And then has to walk er freeze,
Hain't so much "stuck *on*" the snow
As stuck *in* it—Bless ye, no!—
When it's packed, and sleighin' 's good,
And *church* in the neighberhood,
Them 'at's *got* their girls, I guess,
Takes 'em, likely, more er less.
Tell the plain fac's o' the case,
No men-folks about our place
On'y me and Pap—and he
'Lows 'at young folks' company
Allus made him sick! So I

Jes' don't want, and jes' don't try!
Chinkypin, the dad-burn town,
'S too fur off to loaf aroun'
Eether day er night—and no
Law compellin' me to go!—
'Less'n some Old-Settlers' Day,
Er big-doin's thataway—
Then, to tell the p'inted fac',
I've went more so's to come back
By old Guthrie's still-house, where
Minors *has* got licker there—
That's pervidin' we could show 'em
Old folks sent fer it from home!
Visit roun' the neighbers some,
When the *boys* wants me to come.—
Coon-hunt with 'em; er set traps
Fer mussrats; er jes', perhaps,
Lay in roun' the stove, you know,
And parch corn, and let her snow!
Mostly, nights like these, you'll be
(Ef you' got a writ fer *me*)
Ap' to skeer me up, I guess,
In about the Wigginses'.
Nothin' roun' *our* place to keep
Me at home—with Pap asleep
'Fore it's dark; and Mother in
Mango pickles to her chin;
And the girls, all still as death,
Piecin' quilts.—Sence I drawed breath
Twenty year' ago, and heerd
Some girls whisper'n' so's it 'peared

Like they had a row o' pins
In their mouth—right there begins
My first rickollections, built
On that-air blame' old piece-quilt!

Summer-time, it's jes' the same—
'Cause I've noticed,—and I claim,
As I said afore, I'm more
Subjec' to the weather, *shore,*
'Proachin' my majority,
Than I ever ust to be!
Callin' back *last* Summer, say,—
Don't seem hardly past away—
With night closin' in, and all
S' lonesome-like in the dewfall:
Bats—ad-drat their ugly muggs!—
Flicker'n' by; and lightnin'-bugs
Huckster'n' roun' the airly night
Little sickly gasps o' light;—
Whippoorwills, like all possess'd,
Moanin' out their mournfullest;—
Frogs and katydids and things
Jes' *clubs* in and sings and sings
Their *ding-dangdest!*—Stock's all fed,
And Pap's warshed his feet fer bed;—
Mother and the girls all down
At the milk-shed, foolin' roun'—
No wunder 'at I git blue,
And lite out—and so would you!
I cain't stay aroun' no place
Whur they hain't no livin' face:—

'Crost the fields and thue the gaps
Of the hills they's friends, perhaps,
Waitin' somers, 'at kin be
Kind o' comfertin' to me!

Neighbers all is plenty good,
Scattered thue this neighberhood;
Yit, of all, I like to jes'
Drap in on the Wigginses.—
Old man, and old lady too,
'Pear-like, makes so much o' you—
Least, they've allus pampered me
Like one of the fambily.—
The boys, too, 's all thataway—
Want you jes' to come and stay;—
Price, and Chape, and Mandaville,
Poke, Chasteen, and "Catfish Bill"—
Poke's the runt of all the rest,
But he's jes' the beatin'est
Little schemer, fer fourteen,
Anybody ever seen!—
"Like his namesake," old man claims,
"Jeems K. Poke, the first o' names!
Full o' tricks and jokes—and you
Never know what *Poke's* go' do!"
Genius, too, that-air boy is,
With them awk'ard hands o' his:
Gits this blame' pokeberry-juice,
Er some stuff, fer ink—and goose-
Quill pen-p'ints: And then he'll draw
Dogdest pictures yevver saw!—

Jes' make deers and eagles good
As a writin' teacher could!
Then they's two twin boys they've riz
Of old Coonrod Wigginses
'At's deceast—and glad of it,
'Cause his widder's livin' yit!
'Course *the boys* is mostly jes'
Why I go to Wigginses'.—
Though *Melviney,* sometimes, *she*
Gits her slate and algebry
And jes' sets there cipher'n' thue
Sums old Ray hisse'f cain't do!—
Jes' sets there, and tilts her chair
Forreds tel, 'pear-like, her hair
Jes' *spills* in her lap—and then
She jes' dips it up again
With her hands, as white, I swan,
As the apern she's got on!

Talk o' hospitality!—
Go to Wigginses' with me—
Overhet, or froze plum thue,
You'll find welcome waitin' you:—
Th'ow out yer tobacker 'fore
You set foot acrost that floor,—
"Got to eat whatever's set—
Got to drink whatever's wet!"
Old man's sentimuns—them's his—
And means jes' the best they is!

Then he lights his pipe; and she,
The old lady, presen'ly
She lights hern; and Chape and Poke.—
I hain't got none, ner don't smoke,—
(In the crick afore their door—
Sort o' so's 'at I'd be shore—
Drownded mine one night and says
"I won't smoke at *Wiggenses'!*")
Price he's mostly talkin' 'bout
Politics, and "thieves turned out"—
What he's go' to be, ef he
Ever "gits there"—and "we'll see!"—
Poke he 'lows they's blame' few men
Go' to hold their breath tel then!
Then Melviney smiles, as she
Goes on with her algebry,
And the clouds clear, and the room's
Sweeter'n crabapple-blooms!
(That Melviney, she's got some
Most surprisin' ways, i gum!—
Don't 'pear-like she ever *says*
Nothin', yit you'll *listen* jes'
Like she *was* a-talkin', and
Half-way seem to understand,
But not quite,—*Poke* does, I know,
'Cause he good as told me so,—
Poke's *her* favo-rite; and he—
That is, confidentially—
He's *my* favo-rite—and I
Got my whurfore and my why!)

I hain't never be'n no hand
Much at talkin', understand,
But they's *thoughts* o' mine 'at's jes'
Jealous o' them Wigginses!—
Gift o' talkin' 's what they' got,
Whuther they want to er not.—
F'r instunce, start the old man on
Huntin'-scrapes, 'fore game was gone,
'Way back in the Forties, when
Bears stold pigs right out the pen,
Er went waltzin' 'crost the farm
With a beehive on their arm!—
And—sir, *ping!* the old man's gun
Has plumped over many a one,
Firin' at him from afore
That-air very cabin door!
Yes—and *painters,* prowlin' 'bout,
Allus darkest nights.—Lay out
Clost yer cattle.—Great, big red
Eyes a-blazin' in their head,
Glitter'n' 'long the timber-line—
Shine out some and then *un-shine,*
And shine back—Then, stiddy! *whizz!*
'N' there yer Mr. Painter is
With a hole bored spang between
Them-air eyes! . . . Er start Chasteen,
Say, on blooded racin'-stock,
Ef you want to hear him talk;
Er tobacker—how to raise,
Store, and k-yore it, so's she pays. . . .
The old lady—and she'll cote

Scriptur' tel she'll git yer vote!
Prove to you 'at wrong is right,
Jes' as plain as black is white:
Prove when you're asleep in bed
You're a-standin' on yer head,
And yer train 'at's goin' West,
'S goin' East its level best;
And when bees dies, it's their wings
Wears out—And a thousan' things!
And the boys is "chips," you know,
"Off the old block"—So I go
To the Wigginses', 'cause—jes'
'Cause I *like* the Wigginses—
Even ef Melviney *she*
Hardly 'pears to notice me!

Rid to Chinkypin this week—
Yisterd'y.—No snow to speak
Of, and didn't have no sleigh
Anyhow; so, as I say,
I rid in—and froze one ear
And both heels—and I don't keer!—
"Mother and the girls kin jes'
Bother 'bout their Chris'mases
Next time fer *theirse'v's,* i jack!"
Thinks-says-I, a-startin' back,—
Whole durn meal-bag full of things
Wropped in paper sacks, and strings
Liable to snap their holt
Jes' at any little jolt!
That in front o' me, and *wind*

With *nicks* in it, 'at jes' skinned
Me alive!—I'm here to say
Nine mile' hossback thataway
Would 'a' walked my log! But, as
Somepin' allus comes to pass,
As I topped old Guthrie's hill,
Saw a buggy, front the Still,
P'inted home'ards, and a thin
Little chap jes' climbin' in.
Six more minutes I were there
On the groun's!—And 'course it were—
It were little Poke—and he
Nearly fainted to see *me!*—
"You be'n in to Chinky, too?"
"Yes; and go' ride back with you,"
I-says-I. He he'pped me find
Room fer my things in behind—
Stript my hoss's reins down, and
Putt his mitt' on the right hand
So's to lead—"Pile in!" says he,
"But you've struck pore company!"
Noticed he was pale—looked sick,
Kind o' like, and had a quick
Way o' flickin' them-air eyes
O' his roun' 'at didn't size
Up right with his usual style—
S' I, "You *well?*" He tried to smile,
But his chin shuck and tears come.—
"I've run 'Viney 'way from home!"

Don't know jes' what all occurred
Next ten seconds—Nary word,
But my heart jes' drapt, stobbed thue,
And whirlt over and come to.—
Wrenched a big quart-bottle from
That fool-boy!—and cut my thumb
On his little fiste-teeth—helt
Him snug in one arm, and felt
That-air little heart o' his
Churn the blood o' Wigginses
Into that old bead 'at spun
Roun' her, spilt at Lexington!
His k'niptions, like enough,
He'pped us both,—though it was rough—
Rough on him, and rougher on
Me when, last his nerve was gone
And he laid there still, his face
Fishin' fer some hidin'-place
Jes' a leetle lower down
In my breast than he'd yit foun'!
Last I kind o' soothed him, so's
He could talk.—And what you s'pose
Them-air revelations of
Poke's was? . . . He'd be'n writin' love-
Letters to Melviney, and
Givin' her to understand
They was from "a young man who
Loved her," and—"the violet's blue
'N' sugar's sweet"—and Lord knows what!

Tel, 'peared-like, Melviney got
S' inter*est*ed in "the young
Man," Poke *he* says, 'at she brung
A' answer onc't fer him to take,
Statin' "she'd die fer his sake,"
And writ fifty *x*'s "fer
Love-kisses fer him from her!" . . .
I was standin' in the road
By the buggy, all I knowed
When Poke got that fur.—"That's why,"
Poke says, "I 'fessed up the lie—
Had to—'cause I see," says he,
"'Viney was in *airnest*—she
Cried, too, when I told her.—Then
She swore me, and smiled again,
And got Pap and Mother to
Let me hitch and drive her thue
Into Chinkypin, to be
At Aunt 'Rindy's Chris'mas-tree—
That's to-night." Says I, "Poke—durn
Your lyin' soul!—'s that beau o' hern—
That—*she*—loves—Does *he* live in
That hell-hole o' Chinkypin?"
"No," says Poke, "er 'Viney would
Went some *other* neighberhood."
"Who *is* the blame' whelp?" says I.
"Promised 'Viney, hope I'd die
Ef I ever told!" says Poke,
Pittiful and jes' heartbroke'—
"'Sides that's why she left the place,—
'She cain't look him in the face

Now no more on earth!' she says."—
And the child broke down and jes'
Sobbed! . . . Says I, "Poke, I p'tend
T' be *your* friend, and your *Pap's* friend,
And your *Mother's* friend, and all
The *boys'* friend, little, large and small—
The *whole fambily's* friend—and you
Know that means *Melviney,* too.—
Now—you hursh yer troublin'!—I'm
Go' to he'p friends ever' time—
On'y in *this* case, *you* got
To he'p *me*—and, like as not,
I kin he'p *Melviney* then,
And we'll have her home again.
And now, Poke, with your consent,
I'm go' go to that-air gent
She's in love with, and confer
With *him* on his views o' *her.*—
Blast him! give the man *some* show.—
Who *is* he?—*I'm go' to know!"*
Somepin' struck the little chap
Funny, 'peared-like.—Give a slap
On his leg—laughed thue the dew
In his eyes, and says: *"It's you!"*

Yes, and—'cordin' to the last
Love-letters of ours 'at passed
Thue his hands—we was to be
Married Chris'mas.—"Gee-mun-*nee!*
Poke," says I, "it's *suddent*—yit
We *kin* make it! You're to git

Up to-morry, say, 'bout *three*—
Tell your folks you're go' with me:—
We'll hitch up, and jes' drive in
'N' *take* the town o' Chinkypin!"

THE GUDEWIFE

MY gudewife—she that is tae be—
O she sall seeme sang-sweete tae me
As her ain croon tuned wi' the chiel's
Or spinnin'-wheel's.
An' faire she'll be, an' saft, an' light,
An' muslin-bright
As her spick apron, jimpy laced
The-round her waiste.—
Yet aye as rosy sall she bloome
Intil the roome
(The where alike baith bake an' dine)
As a full-fine
Ripe rose, lang rinset wi' the raine,
Sun-kist againe,
Sall seate me at her table-spread,
White as her bread.—
Where I, sae kissen her for *grace,*
Sall see her face
Smudged, yet aye sweeter, for the bit
O' floure on it,
Whiles, witless, she sall sip wi' me
Luve's tapmaist-bubblin' ecstasy.

RIGHT HERE AT HOME

RIGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,
Where strangers allus joke us when they come,
And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—
Yit *settle* here; and 'fore they realize,
They're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and live
Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive'!

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,
Fer me and you and plain old happiness:
We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—
We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—
We know *its* ways ain't *our* ways—so we'll stay
Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way.

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do
Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,
And's got a' extry dollar, any time,
To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb
And's got the git-up in him to go in
And *git there,* like he purt' nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—
Where folks' heart's bigger'n their money-pu's';
And where a *common* feller's jes' as good

As ary other in the neighberhood:
The World at large don't worry you and me
Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

Right here at home, boys—jes' right where we air!—
Birds don't sing any sweeter anywhere:
Grass don't grow any greener'n she grows
Acrost the pastur' where the old path goes,—
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,
Right here at home, boys, ef we *size* 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place
Is sacerd to us as our mother's face,
Jes' as we rickollect her, last she smiled
And kissed us—dyin' so and rickonciled,
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

LITTLE MARJORIE

"WHERE is little Marjorie?"
There's the robin in the tree,
With his gallant call once more
From the boughs above the door!
There's the bluebird's note, and there
Are spring-voices everywhere
Calling, calling ceaselessly—
"Where is little Marjorie?"

And her old playmate, the rain,
Calling at the window-pane
In soft syllables that win
Not her answer from within—
"Where is little Marjorie?"—
Or is it the rain, ah me!
Or wild gusts of tears that were
Calling us—not calling her!

"Where is little Marjorie?"
Oh, in high security
She is hidden from the reach
Of all voices that beseech:
She is where no troubled word,
Sob or sigh is ever heard,
Since God whispered tenderly—
"Where is little Marjorie?"

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

1892

[*Frederick Nicholls Crouch, the Musical Genius and Composer of the world-known air "Kathleen Mavourneen," was, at above date, living, in helpless age, in his adopted country, America—a citizen since 1849.*]

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN! The song is still ringing
As fresh and as clear as the trill of the birds;
In world-weary hearts it is throbbing and singing
In pathos too sweet for the tenderest words.
Oh, have we forgotten the one who first breathed it?
Oh, have we forgotten his rapturous art—
Our meed to the master whose genius bequeathed it?
Oh, why art thou silent, thou Voice of the Heart?—
Our meed to the master whose genius bequeathed it—
Oh, why are we silent, Kathleen Mavourneen!

Kathleen Mavourneen! Thy lover still lingers;
The long night is waning, the stars pale and few;
Thy sad serenader, with tremulous fingers,
Is bowed with his tears as the lily with dew;
The old harp-strings quaver, the old voice is shaking;
In sighs and in sobs moans the yearning refrain;
The old vision dims, and the old heart is breaking . . .
Kathleen Mavourneen, inspire us again!
The old vision dims, and the old heart is breaking:
Oh, why are we silent, Kathleen Mavourneen!

OLD JOHN HENRY

OLD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff—
Old John Henry—
He's tough, I reckon,—but none too tough—
Too tough though's better than not enough!
Says old John Henry.
He does his best, and when his best's bad,
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad—
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:
Old John Henry!

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand—
Old John Henry—
A smilin' face and a hearty hand
'S religen 'at all folks understand,
Says old John Henry.
He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,
And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,
And his hair hain't cut—but his eye-teeth is:
Old John Henry!

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed—
Old John Henry—
And sleeps like a babe when he goes to bed—
And dreams o' Heaven and home-made bread,
Says old John Henry.

He hain't refined as he'd ort to be
To fit the statutes o' poetry,
Ner his clothes don't fit him—but *he* fits *me:*
Old John Henry!

BEING HIS MOTHER

BEING his mother,—when he goes away
I would not hold him overlong, and so
Sometimes my yielding sight of him grows O
So quick of tears, I joy he did not stay
To catch the faintest rumor of them! Nay,
Leave always his eyes clear and glad, although
Mine own, dear Lord, do fill to overflow;
Let his remembered features, as I pray,
Smile ever on me! Ah! what stress of love
Thou givest me to guard with Thee thiswise:
Its fullest speech ever to be denied
Mine own—being his mother! All thereof
Thou knowest only, looking from the skies
As when not Christ alone was crucified.

GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS

HO! green fields and running brooks!
Knotted strings and fishing-hooks
Of the truant, stealing down
Weedy back-ways of the town.

Where the sunshine overlooks,
By green fields and running brooks,
All intruding guests of chance
With a golden tolerance.

Cooing doves, or pensive pair
Of picnickers, straying there—
By green fields and running brooks,
Sylvan shades and mossy nooks!

And—O Dreamer of the Days,
Murmurer of roundelays
All unsung of words or books,
Sing green fields and running brooks!

SOME SCATTERING REMARKS OF BUB'S

WUNST I tooked our pepper-box lid
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,
An' cooked 'em on our stove one day
When our hired girl she said I may.

Honey's the *goodest* thing—Oo-*ooh!*
An' blackburry-pies is goodest, too!
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin' wet
Wiv tree-mullasus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e'!

I *ruther* go to the Circus-show;
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,
I ruther go to the Sund'y-school,
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule
'At's allus at the Sund'y-school?

BY HER WHITE BED

BY her white bed I muse a little space:
She fell asleep—not very long ago,—
And yet the grass was here and not the snow—
The leaf, the bud, the blossom, and—her face!—
Midsummer's heaven above us, and the grace
Of Love's own day, from dawn to afterglow;
The fireflies' glimmering, and the sweet and low
Plaint of the whippoorwills, and every place
In thicker twilight for the roses' scent.
Then *night*.—She slept—in such tranquillity,
I walk atiptoe still, nor *dare* to weep,
Feeling, in all this hush, she rests content—
That though God stood to wake her for me, she
Would mutely plead: "Nay, Lord! Let *him* so sleep."

HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM

NOBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time come on,—
And *then,* I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p about,
As you'd admit, ef you'd 'a' seen the way the crops turned out!

A better quarter-section ner a richer soil warn't found
Than this-here old-home place o' ourn fer fifty miles around!—
The house was small—but plenty-big we found it from the day
That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother more'n me—
That's natchurul; but *both* of us was proud as proud could be;

Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon bright,
And seemed in work as well as play to take the same delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at heart
As robins up at five o'clock to git an airly start;
And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up to say—
"Jes' listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds to-day!"

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin' turn,—
He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to learn:
He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal-minute here
Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read and spell;
And "The Childern of the Abbey"—w'y, he knowed that book as well
At fifteen as his parents!—and "The Pilgrim's Progress," too—
Jes' knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em through and through!

At eighteen, Mother 'lowed the boy must have a
better chance—
That we ort to educate him, under any circum-
stance;
And John he j'ned his mother, and they ding-
donged and kep' on,
Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that
he was gone.

But—I missed him—w'y, of course I did!—The
Fall and Winter through
I never built the kitchen fire, er split a stick in two,
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a
gambrel-pin,
But what I thought o' John, and wished that he was
home ag'in.

He'd come, sometimes—on Sund'ys most—and stay
the Sund'y out;
And on Thanksgivin'-Day he 'peared to like to be
about:
But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller
than before,
And didn't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle
any more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with
a sigh,
He was tryin' to raise side-whiskers, and had on a
stripèd tie,

And a standin'-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick
as bone;
And a breastpin, and a watch and chain and plug-
hat of his own.

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was
to come home
And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see
him come;
But my happiness, that evening, with the settin'
sun went down,
When he bragged of "a position" that was offered
him in town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of
course I will," says he.—
"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life
fer me;
I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light
and gay,
"And town's the place fer *me*, and I'm a-goin' right
away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the
gate,
A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.
I was tranquiller, and told her 'twarn't no use to
worry so,
And onclapsed her arms from round his neck round
mine—and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it out;—
I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuk the boy's hand,
And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd understand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty lonesome, shore!
With we a-workin' in the field, and Mother at the door,
Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more and more—
Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes the boy would write
A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,
And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—
Though his business was confinin', he was gittin' used to it.

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was gittin' on,
And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was gone;
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the stock,
And talk on fer a page er two jes' like he used to talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed
he would git home,
Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—
But *didn't* come:—
We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was
why he stayed.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—
Exceptin' what the neighbers brung who'd been
to town and heard
What store John was clerkin' in, and went round
to inquire
If they could buy their goods there less and sell
their produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore
away,
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanks-
givin'-Day!
The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite
fergit,
The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me
creepy yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the
prongs
Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair
of tongs,
And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' under-
tone,
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-
words unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow," Mother said,
A-tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn head,—
"And the mince-meat I'm a-mixin' is perfection mighty nigh;
And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—" "Who'll eat 'em?" I-says-I.

"The cranberries is drippin'-sweet," says Mother, runnin' on,
P'tendin' not to hear me;—"and somehow I thought of John
All the time they was a-jellin'—fer you know they allus was
His favo*rite*—he likes 'em so!" Says I, "Well, s'pose he does?"

"Oh, nothin' much!" says Mother, with a quiet sort o' smile—
"This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after while!"
And as I turnt and looked around, some one riz up and leant
And putt his arms round Mother's neck, and laughed in low content.

"It's *me*," he says—"your fool-boy John, come back to shake your hand;
Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you understand

How dearer yit than all the world is this old home that we
Will spend Thanksgivin' in fer life—jes' Mother, you and me!"

. . . . . .

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time comes on;
And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he'p about,
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops turns out!

HIS MOTHER'S WAY

TOMPS 'ud allus haf to say
Somepin' 'bout "his Mother's way."—
He lived hard-like—never j'ined
Any church of any kind.—
"It was Mother's way," says he,
"To be good enough fer *me*
And her too,—and cert'inly
Lord has heerd *her* pray!"
Propped up on his dyin' bed,—
"Shore as Heaven's overhead,
I'm a-goin' there," he said—
"It was Mother's way."

THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

THE Hoosier Folk-Child—all unsung—
Unlettered all of mind and tongue;
Unmastered, unmolested—made
Most wholly frank and unafraid:
Untaught of any school—unvexed
Of law or creed—all unperplexed—
Unsermoned, ay, and undefiled,
An all imperfect-perfect child—
A type which (Heaven forgive us!) you
And I do tardy honor to,
And so profane the sanctities
Of our most sacred memories.
Who, growing thus from boy to man,
That dares not be American?
Go, Pride, with prudent underbuzz—
Go *whistle!* as the Folk-Child does.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's world is not
Much wider than the stable-lot
Between the house and highway fence
That bounds the home his father rents.
His playmates mostly are the ducks
And chickens, and the boy that "shucks
Corn by the shock," and talks of town,

And whether eggs are "up" or "down,"
And prophesies in boastful tone
Of "owning horses of his own,"
And "being his own man," and "when
He gets to be, what he'll do then."—
Takes out his jack-knife dreamily
And makes the Folk-Child two or three
Crude corn-stalk figures,—a wee span
Of horses and a little man.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's eyes are wise
And wide and round as brownies' eyes:
The smile they wear is ever blent
With all-expectant wonderment,—
On homeliest things they bend a look
As rapt as o'er a picture-book,
And seem to ask, whate'er befall,
The happy reason of it all:—
Why grass is all so glad a green,
And leaves—and what their lispings mean;—
Why buds grow on the boughs, and why
They burst in blossom by and by—
As though the orchard in the breeze
Had shook and popped its *pop-corn trees,*
To lure and whet, as well they might,
Some seven-league giant's appetite!

The Hoosier Folk-Child's chubby face
Has scant refinement, caste or grace,—
From crown to chin, and cheek to cheek,
It bears the grimy water-streak

Of rinsings such as some long rain
Might drool across the window-pane
Wherethrough he peers, with troubled frown,
As some lorn team drives by for town.
His brow is elfed with wispish hair,
With tangles in it here and there,
As though the warlocks snarled it so
At midmirk when the moon sagged low,
And boughs did toss and skreek and shake,
And children moaned themselves awake,
With fingers clutched, and starting sight
Blind as the blackness of the night!

The Hoosier Folk-Child!—Rich is he
In all the wealth of poverty!
He owns nor title nor estate,
Nor speech but half articulate,—
He owns nor princely robe nor crown;—
Yet, draped in patched and faded brown,
He owns the bird-songs of the hills—
The laughter of the April rills;
And his are all the diamonds set
In Morning's dewy coronet,—
And his the Dusk's first minted stars
That twinkle through the pasture-bars
And litter all the skies at night
With glittering scraps of silver light;—
The rainbow's bar, from rim to rim,
In beaten gold, belongs to him.

THEIR SWEET SORROW

THEY meet to say farewell: Their way
Of saying this is hard to say.—
He holds her hand an instant, wholly
Distressed—and she unclasps it slowly.

He bends *his* gaze evasively
Over the printed page that she
Recurs to, with a new-moon shoulder
Glimpsed from the lace-mists that infold her.

The clock, beneath its crystal cup,
Discreetly clicks—*"Quick! Act! Speak up!"*
A tension circles both her slender
Wrists—and her raised eyes flash in splendor,

Even as he feels his dazzled own.—
Then, blindingly, round either thrown,
They feel a stress of arms that ever
Strain tremblingly—and *"Never! Never!"*

Is whispered brokenly, with half
A sob, like a belated laugh,—
While cloyingly their blurred kiss closes,—
Sweet as the dew's lip to the rose's.

DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

I

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'!
Peekin' from the winder, half awake, and wishin'
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

II

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to dinner.

III

Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-thinkin':—
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr me;
And fiddle on the kitchen wall a-jes' a-eechin' fer me!

LONGFELLOW

THE winds have talked with him confidingly;
The trees have whispered to him; and the night
Hath held him gently as a mother might,
And taught him all sad tones of melody:
The mountains have bowed to him; and the sea,
In clamorous waves, and murmurs exquisite,
Hath told him all her sorrow and delight —
Her legends fair—her darkest mystery.
His verse blooms like a flower, night and day;
Bees cluster round his rhymes; and twitterings
Of lark and swallow, in an endless May,
Are mingling with the tender songs he sings.—
Nor shall he cease to sing—in every lay
Of Nature's voice he sings—and will alway.

HIS VIGIL

CLOSE the book and dim the light,
I shall read no more to-night.
No—I am not sleepy, dear—
Do not go: sit by me here
In the darkness and the deep
Silence of the watch I keep.
Something in your presence so
Soothes me—as in long ago
I first felt your hand—as now—
In the darkness touch my brow:
I've no other wish than you
Thus should fold mine eyelids to,
Saying naught of sigh or tear—
Just as God were sitting here.

THE QUARREL

THEY faced each other: Topaz-brown
And lambent burned her eyes and shot
Sharp flame at his of amethyst.—
"I hate you! Go, and be forgot
As death forgets!" their glitter *hissed*
(So *seemed* it) in their hatred. Ho!
Dared any mortal front her so?—
Tempestuous eyebrows knitted down—
Tense nostril, mouth—no muscle slack,—
And black—the suffocating black—
The stifling blackness of her frown!

Ah! but the lifted face of her!
And the twitched lip and tilted head!
Yet he did neither wince nor stir,—
Only—his hands clenched; and, instead
Of words, he answered with a stare
That stammered not in aught it said,
As might his voice if trusted there.

And what—what spake his steady gaze?—
Was there a look that harshly fell
To scoff her?—or a syllable
Of anger?—or the bitter phrase
That myrrhs the honey of love's lips,

Or curdles blood as poison-drips?
What made their breasts to heave and swell
As billows under bows of ships
In broken seas on stormy days?
We may not know—nor *they* indeed—
What mercy found them in their need.

A sudden sunlight smote the gloom;
And round about them swept a breeze,
With faint breaths as of clover-bloom;
A bird was heard, through drone of bees,—
Then, far and clear and eerily,
A child's voice from an orchard-tree—
Then laughter, sweet as the perfume
Of lilacs, could the hearing see.
And he—O Love! he fed thy name
On bruisèd kisses, while her dim
Deep eyes, with all their inner flame,
Like drowning gems were turned on him.

JOHN BROWN

WRIT in between the lines of his life-deed
We trace the sacred service of a heart
Answering the Divine command, in every part
Bearing on human weal: His love did feed
The loveless; and his gentle hands did lead
The blind, and lift the weak, and balm the smart
Of other wounds than rankled at the dart
In his own breast, that gloried thus to bleed.
He served the lowliest first—nay, then alone—
The most despisèd that e'er wreaked vain breath
In cries of suppliance in the reign whereat
Red Guilt sate squat upon her spattered throne.—
For these doomed there it was he went to death.
God! how the merest man loves one like that!

GO, WINTER!

GO, Winter! Go thy ways! We want again
The twitter of the bluebird and the wren;
Leaves ever greener growing, and the shine
Of Summer's sun—not thine.—

Thy sun, which mocks our need of warmth and love
And all the heartening fervencies thereof,
It scarce hath heat enow to warm our thin
Pathetic yearnings in.

So get thee from us! We are cold, God wot,
Even as *thou* art.—We remember not
How blithe we hailed thy coming.—That was O
Too long—too long ago!

Get from us utterly! Ho! Summer then
Shall spread her grasses where thy snows have been,
And thy last icy footprint melt and mold
In her first marigold.

THANKSGIVING

LET us be thankful—not alone because
Since last our universal thanks were told
We have grown greater in the world's applause,
And fortune's newer smiles surpass the old—

But thankful for all things that come as alms
From out the open hand of Providence:—
The winter clouds and storms—the summer calms—
The sleepless dread—the drowse of indolence.

Let us be thankful—thankful for the prayers
Whose gracious answers were long, long delayed,
That they might fall upon us unawares,
And bless us, as in greater need we prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand
That love held out in welcome to our own,
When love and *only* love could understand
The need of touches we had never known.

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes
That gave their secret to us as they wept,
Yet in return found, with a sweet surprise,
Love's touch upon their lids, and, smiling, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the tears
  Of sorrow have not all been drained away,
That through them still, for all the coming years,
  We may look on the dead face of To-day.

AUTUMN

AS a harvester, at dusk,
Faring down some wooded trail
Leading homeward through the musk
Of May-apple and papaw,
Hazel-bush and spice and haw,—
So comes Autumn, swart and hale,
Drooped of frame and slow of stride,
But withal an air of pride
Looming up in stature far
Higher than his shoulders are;
Weary both in arm and limb,
Yet the wholesome heart of him
Sheer at rest and satisfied.

Greet him as with glee of drums
And glad cymbals, as he comes!
Robe him fair, O Rain and Shine!
He the Emperor—the King—
Royal lord of everything
Sagging Plenty's granary floors
And out-bulging all her doors;
He the god of corn and wine,
Honey, milk, and fruit and oil—
Lord of feast, as lord of toil—
Jocund host of yours and mine!

Ho! the revel of his laugh!—
Half is sound of winds, and half
Roar of ruddy blazes drawn
Up the throats of chimneys wide,
Circling which, from side to side,
Faces—lit as by the Dawn,
With her highest tintings on
Tip of nose, and cheek, and chin—
Smile at some old fairy tale
Of enchanted lovers, in
Silken gown and coat of mail,
With a retinue of elves
Merry as their very selves,
Trooping ever, hand in hand,
Down the dales of Wonderland.

Then the glory of his song!—
Lifting up his dreamy eyes—
Singing haze across the skies;
Singing clouds that trail along
Towering tops of trees that seize
Tufts of them to stanch the breeze;
Singing slanted strands of rain
In between the sky and earth,
For the lyre to mate the mirth
And the might of his refrain:
Singing southward-flying birds
Down to us, and afterwards
Singing them to flight again:
Singing blushes to the cheeks
Of the leaves upon the trees—

Singing on and changing these
Into pallor, slowly wrought,
Till the little, moaning creeks
Bear them to their last farewell,
As Elaine, the lovable,
Was borne down to Lancelot.—
Singing drip of tears, and then
Drying them with smiles again.

Singing apple, peach and grape,
Into roundest, plumpest shape;
Rosy ripeness to the face
Of the pippin; and the grace
Of the dainty stamen-tip
To the huge bulk of the pear,
Pendent in the green caress
Of the leaves, and glowing through
With the tawny laziness
Of the gold that Ophir knew,—
Haply, too, within its rind
Such a cleft as bees may find,
Bungling on it half aware,
And wherein to see them sip,
Fancy lifts an oozy lip,
And the singer's falter there.

Sweet as swallows swimming through
Eddyings of dusk and dew,
Singing happy scenes of home
Back to sight of eager eyes
That have longed for them to come,

Till their coming is surprise
Uttered only by the rush
Of quick tears and prayerful hush:
Singing on, in clearer key,
Hearty palms of you and me
Into grasps that tingle still
Rapturous, and ever will!
Singing twank and twang of strings—
Trill of flute and clarinet
In a melody that rings
Like the tunes we used to play,
And our dreams are playing yet!
Singing lovers, long astray,
Each to each; and, sweeter things,—
Singing in their marriage-day,
And a banquet holding all
These delights for festival.

JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY

WE got up a Christmas-doin's
Last Christmas Eve—
Kind o' dimonstration
'At I railly believe
Give more satisfaction—
Take it up and down—
Than airy intertainment
Ever come to town!

Railly was a *theater*—
That's what it was,—
But, bein' in the church, you know,
We had a *"Santy Claus"*—
So's to git the *old folks*
To patternize, you see,
And *back* the institootion up
Kind o' *morally*.

School-teacher writ the thing—
(Was a friend o' mine)
Got it out o' Longfeller's
Pome "Evangeline"—

Er somers—'bout the *Purituns.*—
*Any*way, the part
"John Alden" fell to *me*—
And learnt it all by heart!

Claircy was *"Percilly"*—
(School-teacher 'lowed
Me and her could act them two
Best of all the crowd)—
Then—blame' ef he didn't
Git her Pap, i jing!—
To take the part o' *"Santy Claus,"*
To wind up the thing.

Law! the fun o' practisun!—
Was a week er two
Me and Claircy didn't have
Nothin' else to do!—
Kep' us jes' a-meetin' round,
Kind o' here and there,
Ever' night rehearsin'-like,
And gaddin' ever'where!

Game was wo'th the candle, though!—
Christmas Eve at last
Rolled around.—And 'tendance jes'
Couldn't been su'passed!—
Neighbers from the country
Come from Clay and Rush—
Yes, and 'crost the county-line
Clean from Puckerbrush!

Meetin'-house jes' trimbled
As "Old Santy" went
Round amongst the childern,
With their pepperment
And sassafrac and wintergreen
Candy, and "a ball
O' pop-corn," the preacher 'nounced,
"Free fer each and all!"

School-teacher suddently
Whispered in my ear,—
"Guess I got you:—*Christmas-gift!*—
Christmas is here!"
I give *him* a gold pen,
And case to hold the thing.—
And *Clairey* whispered, *"Christmas-gift!"*
And I give her *a ring.*

"And now," says I, "jes' watch ***me***—
Christmas-gift," says I,
"I'm a-goin' to git one—
'Santy's' comin' by!"—
Then I rech' and grabbed him:
And, as you'll infer,
'Course I got the old man's,
And *he* gimme *her!*

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

I'VE allus held—till jest of late—
That *Poetry* and me
Got on best, not to 'sociate—
That is, *most* poetry;
But t'other day my *son-in-law,*
Milt—be'n in town to mill—
Fetched home a present-like, fer Ma,—
The Rhymes of Ironquill.

Milt ust to teach; and, 'course, *his* views
Ranks over *common* sense;—
That's *biased* me, till I refuse
'Most all he rickommends.—
But Ma *she* read and read along
And cried, like women will,
About that "Washerwoman's Song"
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And then she made *me* read the thing,
And found my specs and all:
And I jest leant back there—i jing!—
My cheer ag'inst the wall—

And read and *read,* and read and *read,*
All to myse'f—ontil
I lit the lamp and went to bed
With Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped myse'f up there, and—*durn!*—
I never shet an eye
Till daylight!—hogged the whole concern
Tee-total, mighty nigh!—
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes,
Er laugh jest fit to kill—
Clean *captured*-like with them-air rhymes
O' that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old "Marmaton"
'At hain't be'n ever "sized"
In Song before—and yit's rolled on
Jest same as 'postrophized!—
Putt me in mind o' *our* old crick
At *Freeport*—and the *mill*—
And Hinchman's Ford—till jest *home*sick—
Them Rhymes of Ironquill!

Read that-un, too, 'bout "Game o' Whist,"
And likenin' Life to fun
Like *that*—and playin' out yer fist,
However cards is run:
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song"
They sung with sich a will
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong—
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And old John Brown, who broke the sod
  Of freedom's faller field
And sowed his *heart* there, thankin' God
  Pore slaves would git the yield—
Rained his last tears fer them and *us*
  To irrigate and till
A crop of Song as glorious
  As Rhymes of Ironquill.

And—sergeant, died there in the War,
  'At talked, out of his head . . .
He went "back to the Violet Star,"
  I'll bet—jest like he said!—
Yer Wars kin riddle bone and flesh,
  And blow out brains, and spill
Life-blood,—but *Somepin'* lives on, fresh
  As Rhymes of Ironquill!

THE CURSE OF THE WANDERING FOOT

ALL hope of rest withdrawn me!—
What dread command hath put
This awful curse upon me—
The curse of the wandering foot?
Forward and backward and thither,
And hither and yon again—
Wandering ever! And whither?
Answer them, God! Amen.

The blue skies are far o'er me—
The bleak fields near below:
Where the mother that bore me?—
Where her grave in the snow?—
Glad in her trough of a coffin—
The sad eyes frozen shut
That wept so often, often,
The curse of the wandering foot!

Here in your marts I care not
Whatsoever ye think.
Good folk many who dare not
Give me to eat and drink:

Give me to sup of your pity—
  Feast me on prayers!—O ye,
Met I your Christ in the city,
  He would fare forth with me—

Forward and onward and thither,
  And hither again and yon,
With milk for our drink together
  And honey to feed upon—
Nor hope of rest withdrawn us,
  Since the one Father put
The blessèd curse upon us—
  The curse of the wandering foot.

AS MY UNCLE UST TO SAY

I'VE thought a power on men and things—
  As my uncle ust to say,—
And ef folks don't work as they pray, i jings!
  W'y, they ain't no use to pray!
Ef you want somepin', and jes' dead-set
A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet,
And *tears* won't bring it, w'y, you try *sweat,*
  As my uncle ust to say.

They's some don't know their A, B, C's—
  As my uncle ust to say—
And yit don't waste no candle-grease,
  Ner whistle their lives away!
But ef they can't write no book, ner rhyme
No ringin' song fer to last all time,
They can blaze the way fer "the march
      sublime,"
  As my uncle ust to say.

Whoever's Foreman of all things here,
  As my uncle ust to say,
He knows each job 'at we're best fit fer,
  And our round-up, night and day:

And a-sizin' *His* work, east and west,
And north and south, and worst and best,
I ain't got nothin' to suggest,
As my uncle ust to say.

WHITTIER—AT NEWBURYPORT

SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

HAIL to thee, with all good cheer!
Though men say thou liest here
Dead,
And mourn, all uncomforted.

By thy faith refining mine,
Life still lights those eyes of thine,
Clear
As the Autumn atmosphere.

Ever still thy smile appears
As the rainbow of thy tears
Bent
O'er thy love's vast firmament.

Thou endurest—shalt endure,
Purely, as thy song is pure.
Hear
Thus my hail: Good cheer! good cheer!

ROSAMOND C. BAILEY

THOU brave, good woman! Loved of every one;
Not only that in singing thou didst fill
Our thirsty hearts with sweetness, trill on trill,
Even as a wild bird singing in the sun—
Not only that in all thy carols none
But held some tincturing of tears to thrill
Our gentler natures, and to quicken still
Our human sympathies; but thou hast won
Our equal love and reverence because
That thou wast ever mindful of the poor,
And thou wast ever faithful to thy friends.
So, loving, serving all, thy best applause
Thy requiem—the vast throng at the door
Of the old church, with mute prayers and amens.

TENNYSON

ENGLAND, OCTOBER 5, 1892

WE of the New World clasp hands
with the Old
In newer fervor and with firmer hold
And nobler fellowship,—
O Master Singer, with the finger-tip
Of Death laid thus on thy melodious lip!

All ages thou hast honored with thine art,
And ages yet unborn thou wilt be part
Of all songs pure and true!
Thine now the universal homage due
From Old and New World—ay, and still
The New!

MRS. BENJAMIN HARRISON

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 25, 1892

NOW utter calm and rest;
Hands folded o'er the breast
In peace the placidest,
All trials past;
All fever soothed—all pain
Annulled in heart and brain
Never to vex again—
She sleeps at last.

She sleeps; but O most dear
And best beloved of her
Ye sleep not—nay, nor stir,
Save but to bow
The closer each to each,
With sobs and broken speech,
That all in vain beseech
Her answer now.

And lo! we weep with you,
One grief the wide world through:
Yet with the faith she knew
We see her still,

Even as here she stood—
All that was pure and good
And sweet in womanhood—
God's will her will.

THE POEMS HERE AT HOME

THE Poems here at Home!—Who'll write 'em
down,
Jes' as they air—in Country and in Town?—
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and lanes,
Er these-'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—
Who'll "voice" 'em? as I heerd a feller say
'At speechified on Freedom, t'other day,
And soared the Eagle tel, it 'peared to me,
She wasn't bigger'n a bumblebee!

Who'll sort 'em out and set 'em down, says I,
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try
To do 'em jestice 'thout a-foolin' some,
And headin' facts off when they want to come?—
Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and brain
To reco'nize 'at nothin's made in vain—
'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds
And brutes first choice, and us-folks afterwards?

What We want, as I sense it, in the line
O' poetry is somepin' Yours and Mine—
Somepin' with live stock in it, and out-doors,
And old crick-bottoms, snags, and sycamores:

Putt weeds in—pizen-vines, and underbresh,
As well as johnny-jump-ups, all so fresh
And sassy-like!—and groun'-squir'ls,—yes, and
"We,"
As sayin' is,—"We, Us and Company!"

Putt in old Nature's sermonts,—them's the best,—
And 'casion'ly hang up a hornets' nest
'At boys 'at's run away from school can git
At handy-like—and let 'em tackle it!
Let us be wrought on, of a truth, to feel
Our proneness fer to hurt more than we heal,
In ministratin' to our vain delights—
Fergittin' even insec's has their rights!

No "Ladies' Amaranth," ner "Treasury" book—
Ner "Night Thoughts," nuther—ner no "Lally
Rook"!
We want some poetry 'at's to Our taste,
Made out o' truck 'at's jes' a-goin' to waste
'Cause smart folks thinks it's altogether too
Outrageous common—'cept fer me and you!—
Which goes to argy, all sich poetry
Is 'bliged to rest its hopes on You and Me.

LITTLE COUSIN JASPER

LITTLE Cousin Jasper, he
Don't live in this town, like me,—
He lives 'way to Rensselaer,
An' ist comes to visit here.

He says 'at our court-house square
Ain't nigh big as theirn is there!—
He says their town's big as four
Er five towns like this, an' more!

He says ef his folks moved here
He'd cry to leave Rensselaer—
'Cause they's prairies there, an' lakes,
An' wile-ducks an' rattlesnakes!

Yes, 'n' little Jasper's Pa
Shoots most things you ever saw!—
Wunst he shot a deer, one day,
'At swummed off an' got away.

Little Cousin Jasper went
An' camped out wunst in a tent
Wiv his Pa, an' helt his gun
While he kilt a turrapun.

An' when his Ma heerd o' that,
An' more things his Pa's bin at,
She says, "Yes, 'n' he'll git shot
'Fore he's man-grown, like as not!"

An' they's mussrats there, an' minks,
An' di-dippers, an' chee-winks,—
Yes, 'n' cal'mus-root you chew
All up an' 't 'on't pizen you!

An', in town, 's a flag-pole there—
Highest one 'at's anywhere
In this world!—wite in the street
Where the big mass-meetin's meet.

Yes, 'n' Jasper he says they
Got a brass band there, an' play
On it, an' march up an' down
An' all over round the town!

Wisht our town ain't like it is!—
Wisht it's ist as big as his!
Wisht 'at *his* folks they'd move *here,*
An' *we'd* move to Rensselaer!

THE DOODLE-BUGS'S CHARM

WHEN Uncle Sidney he comes here—
An' Fred an' me an' Min,—
My Ma she says she bet you yet
The roof'll tumble in!
Fer Uncle he ist *romps* with us:
An' wunst, out in our shed,
He telled us 'bout the Doodle-Bugs,
An' what they'll do, he said,
Ef you'll ist holler "Doodle-Bugs!"—
Out by our garden-bed—
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!
Come up an' git some bread!"

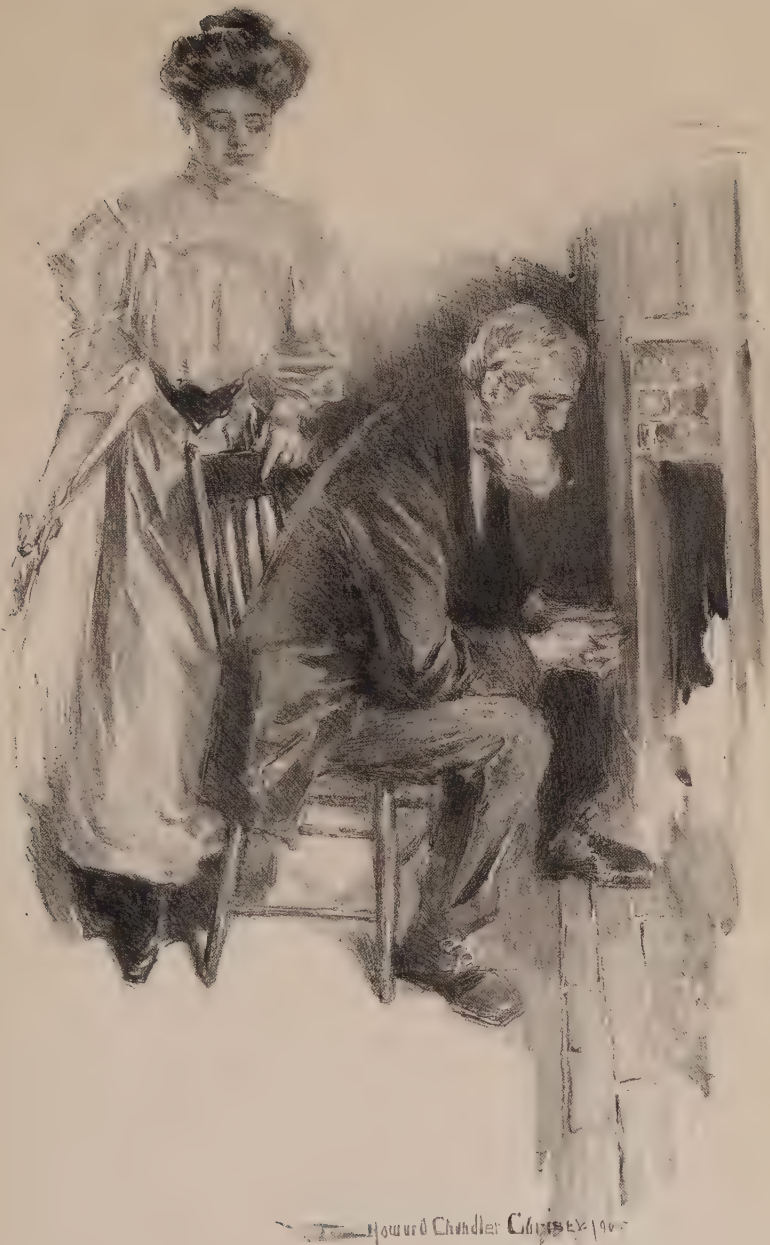
Ain't Uncle Sidney funny man?—
"He's childish 'most as me"—
My Ma sometimes she tells him that—
"He ac's so foolishly!"
W'y, wunst, out in our garden-path,
Wite by the pie-plant bed,
He all sprawled out there in the dirt
An' ist scrooched down his head,
An' "Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"
My Uncle Sidney said,—
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!
Come up an' git some bread!"

An' nen he showed us little holes
  All bored there in the ground,
An' little weenty heaps o' dust
  'At's piled there all around:
An' Uncle said, when he's like us,
  Er purt' nigh big as Fred,
That wuz the Doodle-Bugs's Charm—
  To call 'em up, he said:—
"Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"
  An' they'd poke out their head—
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!
  Come up an' git some bread!"

"HOME AG'IN"

I'M a-feelin' ruther sad,
Fer a father proud and glad
As *I* am—my only child
Home, and all so rickonciled!
Feel so strange-like, and don't know
What the mischief ails me so!
'Stid o' bad, I ort to be
Feelin' good pertickerly—
Yes, and extry thankful, too,
'Cause my nearest kith-and-kin,
My Elviry's schoolin' 's through,
And I' got her home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

Same as ef her mother'd been
Livin', I have done my best
By the girl, and watchfulest;
Nussed her—keerful' as I could—



"Home Ag'in with me!"

From a baby, day and night,—
Drawin' on the neighberhood
And the women-folks as light
As needsessity 'ud 'low—
'Cept in "teethin'," onc't, and fight
Through black-measles. Don't know now
How we ever saved the child!
Doc *he'd* give her up, and said,
As I stood there by the bed
Sort o' foolin' with her hair
On the hot, wet pillar there,
"Wuz no use!"—And at them-air
Very words she waked and smiled—
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that's where
I broke down, and simply jes'
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—
Women claim I did, but I
Allus helt I didn't cry,
But wuz laughin',—and I *wuz,*—
Men don't cry like *women* does!
Well, right then and there I felt
'T'uz her mother's doin's, and,
Jes' like to myse'f, I knelt
Whisperin', "I understand." . . .
So I've raised her, you might say,
Stric'ly in the narrer way
'At her mother walked therein—
Not so quite religiously,

Yit still strivin'-like to do
Ever'thing a father *could*
Do he knowed the *mother* would
Ef she'd lived—And now all's through
And I' got her home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

And I' been so lonesome, too,
Here o' late, especially,—
"Old Aunt Abigail," you know,
Ain't no company;—and so
Jes' the hired hand, you see—
Jonas—like a relative
More—sence he come here to live
With us, nigh ten year' ago.
Still he don't count much, you know,
In the way o' company—
Lonesome, 'peared-like, 'most as me!
So, as *I* say, I' been so
Special lonesome-like and blue,
With Elviry, like she's been,
'Way so much, last two or three
Year'—But now she's home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

Driv in fer her yisterday,
Me and Jonas—gay and spry,—
We jes' cut up, all the way!—
Yes, and sung!—tel, blame it! I
Keyed my voice up 'bout as high

As when—days 'at I wuz young—
"Buckwheat-notes" wuz all they sung.
Jonas bantered me, and 'greed
To sing one 'at town-folks sing
Down at Split Stump 'er High-Low—
Some new "ballet," said, 'at he'd
Learnt—about "The Grape-vine Swing."
And when *he* quit, *I* begun
To chune up my voice and run
Through the what's-called "scales" and "do-
Sol-me-fa's" I *ust* to know—
Then let loose old favor*ite* one,
"Hunters o' Kentucky!" *My!*
Tel I thought the boy would *die!*
And we *both* laughed—Yes, and still
Heerd more laughin', top the hill;
Fer we'd missed Elviry's train,
And she'd lit out 'crost the fields,—
Dewdrops dancin' at her heels,
And cut up old Smoots's lane
So's to meet us. And there in
Shadder o' the chinkypin,
With a danglin' dogwood-bough
Bloomin' 'bove her—See her now!—
Sunshine sort o' flickerin' down
And a kind o' laughin' all
Round her new red parasol,
Tryin' to git at *her!*—well—like
I jumped out and showed 'em how—
Yes, and jes' the place to strike

That-air mouth o' hern—as sweet
As the blossoms breshed her brow
Er sweet-williams round her feet—
White and blushy, too, as she
"Howdied" up to Jonas, and
Jieuked her head, and waved her hand.
"Hey!" says I, as she bounced in
The spring-wagon, reachin' back
To give *me* a lift, "whoop-ee!"
I-says-ee, "you're home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!"

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,
Gittin' home!—and things she had
To inquire about, and talk—
Plowin', plantin', and the stock—
News o' neighberhood; and how
Wuz the Deem-girls doin' now,
Sence that-air young chicken-hawk
They was "tamin'" soared away
With their settin'-hen, one day?—
(Said she'd got Mame's postal-card
'Bout it, very day 'at she
Started home from Bethany.)
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—
Er wuz stores still claimin' "hard
Times," as usual? And, says she,
Troubled-like, "How's Deedie—say?
Sence pore child e-loped away
And got back, and goin' to 'ply
Fer school-license by and by—

And where's 'Lijy workin' at?
And how's 'Aunt' and 'Uncle Jake'?
How wuz 'Old Maje'—and the cat?
And wuz Marthy's baby fat
As his 'Humpty-Dumpty' ma?—
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—
Must run 'crost and see her, too,
Soon as she turned in and got
Supper fer us—smokin'-hot—
And the 'dishes' all wuz through.—"
Sich a supper! W'y, I set
There and et, and et, and et!—
Jes' et on, tel Jonas he
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,
"I could walk *his* log!" and we
All laughed then, tel 'Viry she
Lit the lamp—and I give in!—
Riz and kissed her: "Heaven bless
You!" says I—"you're home ag'in—
Same old dimple in your chin,
Same white apern," I-says-ee,
"Same sweet girl, and good to see
As your *mother* ust to be,—
And I' got you home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!"

I turns then to go on by her
Through the door—and see her eyes
Both wuz swimmin', and she tries
To say somepin'—can't—and so
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.

Noticed Aunty'd made a fire
In the settin'-room and gone
Back where her p'serves wuz on
Bilin' in the kitchen. I
Went out on the porch and set,
Thinkin'-like. And by and by
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,
At the organ, kind o' go
A mi-anderin' up and down
With her fingers 'mongst the keys—
"Vacant Chair" and "Old Camp-
Groun'." . .
Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze
Lazin' round the locus' trees—
Heerd the hosses champin', and
Jonas feedin', and the hogs—
Yes, and katydids and frogs—
And a tree-toad, somers. Heerd
Also whipperwills.—*My land!*—
All so mournful ever'where—
Them out here, and her in there,—
'Most like 'tendin' *services!*
Anyway, I must 'a' jes'
Kind o' drapped asleep, I guess;
'Cause when Jonas must 'a' passed
Me, a-comin' in, I knowed
Nothin' of it—yit it seemed
Sort o' like I kind o' dreamed
'Bout him, too, a-slippin' in,
And a-watchin' back to see
Ef I *wuz* asleep, and then

Passin' in where 'Viry wuz;
And where I declare it does
'Pear to me I heerd him say,
Wild and glad and whisperin'—
'Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,
"Ah! I' got you home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!"

THE SPOILED CHILD

'CAUSE Herbert Graham's a' only child—
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
His parunts uz got him purt' nigh spiled—
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
Allus ever'where his Ma tells
Where *she's* bin at, little Herbert yells,
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
An' when she telled us wunst when she
Wuz ist 'bout big as him an' me,
W'y, little Herbert he says, says-ee,
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
Foolishest young-un you ever saw.—
"Wuz I there, Ma? Wuz I there, Ma?"

THE BEE-BAG

WHEN I was ist a Brownie—a weenty-
teenty Brownie—
Long afore I got to be like Childerns is to-day,—
My good old Brownie granny gimme sweeter thing
'an can'y—
An' 'at's my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!
O my little bee-bag—
My little funny bee-bag—
My little honey bee-bag
The Fairies stold away!

One time when I bin swung in wiv annuver Brownie
young-un
An' lef' sleepin' in a pea-pod while our parunts
went to play,
I waked up ist a-cryin' an' a-sobbin' an' a-sighin'
Fer my little funny bee-bag the Fairies stold
away!
O my little bee-bag—
My little funny bee-bag—
My little honey bee-bag
The Fairies stold away!

It's awful much bewilder'n', but 'at's why I'm *a Childern,*
Ner goin' to git to be no more a Brownie sence that day!
My parunts, so imprudent, lef' me sleepin' when they shouldn't!
An' I want my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!
O my little bee-bag—
My little funny bee-bag—
My little honey bee-bag
The Fairies stold away!

THE TRULY MARVELOUS

GIUNTS is the biggest mens they air
In all this world er anywhere!—
An' Tom Thumb he's the most little-est man,
'Cause wunst he lived in a oyshture-can!

OLD CHUMS

"IF I die first," my old chum paused to say,
"Mind! not a whimper of regret:—instead,
Laugh and be glad, as I shall.—Being dead,
I shall not lodge so very far away
But that our mirth shall mingle.—So, the day
The word comes, joy with me." "I'll try," I said,
Though, even speaking, sighed and shook my head
And turned, with misted eyes. His roundelay
Rang gaily on the stair; and then the door
Opened and—closed. . . . Yet something of the clear,
Hale hope, and force of wholesome faith he had
Abided with me—strengthened more and more.—
Then—then they brought his broken body here:
And I laughed—whisperingly—and we were glad.

"THIS DEAR CHILD-HEARTED WOMAN THAT IS DEAD"

I

THIS woman, with the dear child-heart,
Ye mourn as dead, is—where and what?
With faith as artless as her Art,
I question not,—

But dare divine, and feel, and know
Her blessedness—as hath been writ
In allegory.—Even so
I fashion it:—

II

A stately figure, rapt and awed
In her new guise of Angelhood,
Still lingered, wistful—knowing God
Was very good.—

Her thought's fine whisper filled the pause;
And, listening, the Master smiled,
And lo! the stately angel was
—A little child.

"HOW DID YOU REST, LAST NIGHT?"

"HOW did you rest, last night?"—
I've heard my gran'pap say
Them words a thousand times—that's right—
Jes' them words thataway!
As punctchul-like as morning dast
To ever heave in sight
Gran'pap 'ud allus haf to ast—
"How did you rest, last night?"

Us young-uns used to grin,
At breakfast, on the sly,
And mock the wobble of his chin
And eyebrows helt so high
And kind: *"How did you rest, last night?"*
We'd mumble and let on
Our voices trimbled, and our sight
Wuz dim, and hearin' gone.

. . . . . .

Bad as I ust to be,
All I'm a-wantin' is
As puore and ca'm a sleep fer me
And sweet a sleep as his!

And so I pray, on Jedgment Day
To wake, and with its light
See *his* face dawn, and hear him say—
"How did you rest, last night?"

TO—"THE J. W. R. LITERARY CLUB"

WELL, it's enough to turn his head to have a feller's name
Swiped with a *Literary* Club!—But *you're* the ones to blame!—
I call the World to witness that I never *agged* ye to it
By ever writin' *Classic-like—because I couldn't* do it:
I never run to "Hellicon," ner writ about "Per-nas-sus,"
Ner ever tried to rack er ride around on old "P-*gass*us"!
When "Tuneful Nines" has cross'd my lines, the ink 'ud blot and blur it,
And pen 'ud jest putt back fer home, and take the short-way fer it!
And so, as I'm a-sayin',—when you name your LITERARY
In honor o' this name o' mine, it's railly nesses-sary—
Whilse I'm *a-thankin'* you and all—to *warn* you, ef you do it,
I'll haf to jine the thing myse'f 'fore I can live up to it!

The Old Riley Homestead, Greenfield, Indiana

(Where he was born, October 7, 1849)

OUT OF THE DARK AND THE DEARTH

HO! but the darkness was densely black!
And young feet faltered and groped their way,
With never the gleam of a star, alack!
Nor a moonbeam's lamest ray!—
Blind of light as the blind of sight.—
And that was the night—the night!

And out of the blackness, vague and vast,
And out of the dark and the dearth, behold!—
A great ripe radiance grew at last
And burst like a bubble of gold,
Gilding the way that the feet danced on.—
And that was the dawn—The Dawn!

LITTLE DAVID

THE mother of the little boy that sleeps
Has blest assurance, even as she weeps:
She knows her little boy has now no pain—
No further ache, in body, heart or brain;
All sorrow is lulled for him—all distress
Passed into utter peace and restfulness.—
All health that heretofore has been denied—
All happiness, all hope, and all beside
Of childish longing, now he clasps and keeps
In voiceless joy—the little boy that sleeps.

HOME AGAIN

I'M bin a-visitun 'bout a week
To my little Cousin's at Nameless Creek;
An' I'm got the hives an' a new straw hat,
An' I'm come back home where my beau lives at.

A SEA-SONG FROM THE SHORE

HAIL! Ho!
Sail! Ho!
Ahoy! Ahoy! Ahoy!
Who calls to me,
So far at sea?
Only a little boy!

Sail! Ho!
Hail! Ho!
The sailor he sails the sea:
I wish he would capture
A little sea-horse
And send him home to me.

I wish, as he sails
Through the tropical gales,
He would catch me a sea-bird, too,
With its silver wings
And the song it sings,
And its breast of down and dew!

I wish he would catch me a
Little mermaid,
Some island where he lands,
With her dripping curls,
And her crown of pearls,
And the looking-glass in her hands!

Hail! Ho!
Sail! Ho!
Sail far o'er the fabulous main!
And if I were a sailor,
I'd sail with you,
Though I never sailed back again.

THE DEAD WIFE

ALWAYS I see her in a saintly guise
Of lilied raiment, white as her own brow
When first I kissed the tear-drops to the eyes
That smile forever now.

Those gentle eyes! They seem the same to me,
As, looking through the warm dews of mine own,
I see them gazing downward patiently
Where, lost and all alone

In the great emptiness of night, I bow
And sob aloud for one returning touch
Of the dear hands that, Heaven having now,
I need so much—so much!

TO ELIZABETH

OBIT JULY 8, 1893

O NOBLE, true and pure and lovable
As thine own blessed name, ELIZABETH!—
Aye, even as its cadence lingereth
Upon the lips that speak it, so the spell
Of thy sweet memory shall ever dwell
As music in our hearts. Smiling at Death
As on some later guest that tarrieth,
Too gratefully o'erjoyed to say farewell,
Thou hast turned from us but a little space—
We miss thy presence but a little while,
Thy voice of sympathy, thy word of cheer,
The radiant glory of thine eyes and face,
The glad midsummer morning of thy smile,—
For still we feel and know that thou art here.

ARMAZINDY

ARMAZINDY;—fambily name
Ballenger,—you'll find the same,
As her Daddy answered it,
In the old War-rickords yit,—
And, like him, she's airnt the good
Will o' all the neighberhood.—
Name ain't down in *History,*—
But, i jucks! it *ort* to be!
Folks is got respec' fer *her*—
Armazindy Ballenger!—
'Specially the ones 'at knows
Fac's o' how her story goes
From the start:—Her father blowed
Up—eternally furloughed—
When the old "Sultana" bu'st,
And sich men wuz needed wusst.—
Armazindy, 'bout fourteen-
Year-old then—and thin and lean
As a killdee,—but—*my la!*—
Blamedest nerve you ever saw!
The girl's mother'd *allus* be'n
Sickly—wuz consumpted when
Word came 'bout her husband.—So

Folks perdicted *she'd* soon go—
(Kind o' grief *I* understand,
Losin' *my* companion,—and
Still a widower—and still
Hinted at, like neighbers will!)
So, app'inted, as folks said,
Ballenger a-bein' dead,
Widder, 'peared-like, gradjully,
Jes' grieved after him tel *she*
Died, nex' Aprile wuz a year,—
And in Armazindy's keer
Leavin' the two twins, as well
As her pore old miz'able
Old-maid aunty 'at had be'n
Struck with palsy, and wuz then
Jes' a he'pless charge on *her*—
Armazindy Ballenger.

Jevver watch a primrose 'bout
Minute 'fore it blossoms out—
Kind o' loosen-like, and blow
Up its muscles, don't you know,
And, all suddent, bu'st and bloom
Out life-size?—Well, I persume
'At's the only measure I
Kin size Armazindy by!—
Jes' a *child, one* minute,—nex',
Woman-grown, in all respec's
And intents and purposuz—
'At's what Armazindy wuz!

—And jes' sich a girl wuz Jule
Reddinhouse.—*She'd* be'n to school
At *New Thessaly,* i gum!—
Fool before, but that he'pped *some*—
'Stablished-like more confidence
'At she *never* had no sense.
But she wuz a cunnin', sly,
Meek and lowly sort o' lie,
'At men-folks like me and you
B'lieves jes' 'cause we ortn't to.—
Jes' as purty as a snake,
And as *pizen*—mercy sake!
Well, about them times it wuz,
Young Sol Stephens th'ashed fer us;
And we sent him over to
Armazindy's place to do
Her work fer her.—And-sir! Well—
Mighty little else to tell,—
Sol he fell in love with her—
Armazindy Ballenger!

Bless ye!—'Ll, of all the love
'At I've ever yit knowed of,
That-air case o' theirn beat all!
W'y, she *worshiped* him!—And Sol,
'Peared-like, could 'a' kissed the sod
(Sayin' is) where that girl trod!
Went to town, she did, and bought
Lot o' things 'at neighbers thought
Mighty strange fer *her* to buy,—
Raal chintz dress-goods—and 'way high!—

Cut long in the skyrt,—also
Gaiter-pair o' shoes, you know;
And lace collar;—yes, and fine
Stylish hat, with ivy-vine
And red ribbons, and these-'ere
Artificial flowers and queer
Little beads and spangles, and
Oysturch-feathers round the band!
Wore 'em, Sund'ys, fer a while—
Kind o' went to Church in style,
Sol and Armazindy!—Tel
It was noised round purty well
They wuz *promised*.—And they wuz—
Sich news travels—well it does!—
Pity 'at *that* did!—Fer jes'
That-air fac' and nothin' less
Must 'a' putt it in the mind
O' Jule Reddinhouse to find
Out some dratted way to hatch
Out *some* plan to break the match—
'Cause she *done* it!—*How?* they's none
Knows adzac'ly *what* she done;
Some claims she writ letters to
Sol's folks, up nigh Pleasant View
Somers—and described, you see,
"Armazindy's fambily"—
Hintin' "ef Sol married *her,*
He'd jes' be pervidin' fer
Them-air twins o' hern, and old
Palsied aunt 'at couldn't hold
Spoon to mouth, and layin' near

Bedrid' on to eighteen year',
And still likely, 'pearantly,
To live out the century!"
Well—whatever plan Jule laid
Out to reach the p'int she made,
It wuz *desper't.*—And she won,
Finully, by marryun
Sol herse'f—*e-lopin',* too,
With him, like she *had* to do,—
'Cause her folks 'ud allus swore
"Jule should never marry pore!"

This-here part the story I
Allus haf to hurry by,—
Way 'at Armazindy jes'
Drapped back in her linsey dress,
And grabbed holt her loom, and shet
Her jaws square.—And ef she fret
Any 'bout it—never 'peared
Sign 'at *neighbers* seed er heerd;—
Most folks liked her all the more—
I know *I* did—certain-shore!—
('Course *I'd* knowed her *Pap,* and what
Stock she come of.—Yes, and thought,
And think *yit,* no man on earth
'S worth as much as that girl's worth!)

As fer Jule and Sol, they had
Their sheer!—less o' good than bad!—
Her folks let her go.—They said,
"Spite o' them she'd made her bed

And must sleep in it!"—But she,
'Peared-like, didn't sleep so free
As she ust to—ner so *late,*
Ner so *fine,* I'm here to state!—
Sol wuz pore, of course, and she
Wuzn't ust to poverty—
Ner she didn't 'pear to jes'
'Filiate with lonesomeness,—
'Cause Sol *he* wuz off and out
With his th'asher nigh about
Half the time; er, season done,
He'd be off mi-anderun
Round the country, here and there,
Swappin' hosses. Well, that-air
Kind o' livin' didn't suit
Jule a bit!—and then, to boot,
She had now the keer o' two
Her own childern—and to do
Her own work and cookin'—yes,
And sometimes fer *hands,* I guess,
Well as fambily of her own.—
Cut her pride clean to the bone!
So how *could* the whole thing end?—
She set down, one night, and penned
A short note, like—'at she sewed
On the childern's blanket—blowed
Out the candle—pulled the door
To close after her—and, shore-
Footed as a cat is, clumb
In a rigg there and left home,

With a man a-drivin' who
"Loved her ever fond and true,"
As her note went on to say,
When Sol read the thing next day.

Raaly didn't 'pear to be
Extry waste o' sympathy
Over Sol—pore feller!—Yit,
Sake o' them-air little bit
O' two *orphants*—as you might
Call 'em *then,* by law and right,—
Sol's old friends wuz sorry, and
Tried to hold him out their hand
Same as allus: But he'd flinch—
Tel, jes' 'peared-like, inch by inch,
He let *all* holts go; and so
Took to drinkin', don't you know,—
Tel, to make a long tale short,
He wuz fuller than he ort
To 'a' be'n, at work one day
'Bout his th'asher, and give way,
Kind o' like and fell and ketched
In the beltin'.
. . . Rid and fetched
Armazindy to him.—He
Begged me to.—But time 'at she
Reached his side, he smiled and *tried*
To speak.—Couldn't. So he died. . . .
Hands all turned and left her there
And went somers else—*some*where.

Last, she called us back—in clear
Voice as man'll ever hear—
Clear and stiddy, 'peared to me,
As her old Pap's ust to be.—
Give us orders what to do
'Bout the body—he'pped us, too.
So it wuz, Sol Stephens passed
In Armazindy's hands at last.
More'n that, she claimed 'at she
Had consent from him to be
Mother to his childern—now
'Thout no parents anyhow.

Yes-sir! and she's *got* 'em, too,—
Folks saw nothin' else 'ud do—
So they let her have *her way*—
Like she's doin' yit to-day!
Years now, I've be'n coaxin' her—
Armazindy Ballenger—
To in-large her fambily
Jes' *one* more by takin' *me*—
Which I'm feared she never will,
Though I'm 'lectioneerin' still.

THREE SINGING FRIENDS

I

LEE O. HARRIS

SCHOOLMASTER and Songmaster! Memory
Enshrines thee with an equal love, for thy
Duality of gifts,—thy pure and high
Endowments—Learning rare, and Poesy.
These were as mutual handmaids, serving thee,
Throughout all seasons of the years gone by,
With all enduring joys 'twixt earth and sky—
In turn shared nobly with thy friends and me.
Thus is it that thy clear song, ringing on,
Is endless inspiration, fresh and free
As the old Mays at verge of June sunshine;
And musical as then, at dewy dawn,
The robin hailed us, and all twinklingly
Our one path wandered under wood and vine.

II

BENJ. S. PARKER

Thy rapt song makes of Earth a realm of light
And shadow mystical as some dreamland
Arched with unfathomed azure—vast and grand

With splendor of the morn; or dazzling bright
With orient noon; or strewn with stars of night
  Thick as the daisies blown in grasses fanned
  By odorous midsummer breezes and
Showered over by all bird-songs exquisite.
This is thy voice's beatific art—
  To make melodious all things below,
    Calling through them, from far, diviner
      space,
Thy clearer hail to us.—The faltering heart
  Thou cheerest; and thy fellow mortal so
    Fares onward under Heaven with lifted face.

III

JAMES NEWTON MATTHEWS

Bard of our Western world!—its prairies wide,
  With edging woods, lost creeks and hidden
    ways;
  Its isolated farms, with roundelays
Of orchard warblers heard on every side;
Its cross-road schoolhouse, wherein still abide
  Thy fondest memories,—since there thy gaze
  First fell on classic verse; and thou, in praise
Of that, didst find thine own song glorified.
So singing, smite the strings and counterchange
  The lucently melodious drippings of
    Thy happy harp, from airs of "Tempe Vale,"
To chirp and trill of lowliest flight and range,
  In praise of our To-day and home and love—
    Thou meadow-lark no less than nightingale.

AT HIS WINTRY TENT

SAMUEL RICHARDS—ARTIST—DENVER, COLORADO

NOT only master of his art was he,
But master of his spirit—winged indeed
For lordliest height, yet poised for lowliest need
Of those, alas! upheld less buoyantly.
He gloried even in adversity,
And won his country's plaudits, and the meed
Of Old World praise, as one loath to succeed
While others were denied like victory.
Though passed, I count him still my master-friend,
Invincible as through his mortal fight,—
The laughing light of faith still in his eye
As, at his wintry tent, pitched at the end
Of life, he gaily called to me "Good night,
Old friend, good night—for there is no good-by."

UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

UP and down old Brandywine,
In the days 'at's past and gone—
With a dad-burn hook-and-line
And a saplin'-pole—i swawn!
I've had more fun, to the square
Inch, than ever *any*where!
Heaven to come can't discount *mine,*
Up and down old Brandywine!

Hain't no sense in *wishin'*—yit
Wisht to goodness I *could* jes'
"Gee" the blame' world round and git
Back to that old happiness!—
Kind o' drive back in the shade
"The old Covered Bridge" there laid
'Crosst the crick, and sort o' soak
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no *dream*
'At I'm wantin',—but *the fac's*
As they wuz; the same old stream,
And the same old times, i jacks!—

Gimme back my bare feet—and
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!—
And let hottest dog-days shine
Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees
'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,
Kind o' curdled with the breeze
And the yallerhammer's tune;
And the smokin', chokin' dust
O' the turnpike at its wusst—
Saturd'ys, say, when it seems
Road's jes' jammed with country teams!

Whilse the old town, fur away
'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,
Dozed-like in the heat o' day
Peaceful' as a hired hand.
Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar
With yer blame' percession-line—
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw hat
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—
Like the old Clown ust to wear.—
Wouldn't swap it fer a' old
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gim-me
Jes' the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal
My best "goggle-eye!"—but you
Can't lay hands on joys I feel
Nibblin' like they ust to do!
So, in memory, to-day
Same old ripple lips away
At my "cork" and saggin' line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift
Out sunfish from daylight till
Dewfall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"
And give *us* a chance—and then
Kind o' fish back home again,
Ketchin' 'em jes' left and right
Where *we* hadn't got "a bite"!

Er, 'way windin' out and in,—
Old path th'ough the iurnweeds
And dog-fennel to yer chin—
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds
And cattails, smack into where
Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare
Us clean 'crosst the County-line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam
It 'ud coax us furder still
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—

Where, I 'spect, "the Freeport crowd"
Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed
We wuz quite so overly
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—
Fur away from home as *there*—
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—
Fish in stream, er bird in air!
O them rich old bottom-lands,
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!
Wortermelons—*master-mine!*
Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw
Gold and green,—jes' oozy th'ough
With ripe yaller—like you've saw
Custard-pie with no crust to:
And jes' *gorges* o' wild plums,
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs
Clean up to his elbows! *My!—*
Me some more er lem me die!

Up and down old Brandywine!
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—
Flick me with a pizen-vine
And yell *"Yip!"* and lem me loose!
—Old now as I then wuz young,
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,
Song 'ud shorely ring *dee-vine*
Up and down old Brandywine!

WRITIN' BACK TO THE HOME-FOLKS

MY dear old friends—It jes' beats all,
The way you write a letter
So's ever' *last* line beats the *first,*
And ever' *next*-un's better!—
W'y, ever' fool-thing you putt down
You make so inter*est*in',
A feller, readin' of 'em all,
Can't tell which is the *best*-un.

It's all so comfortin' and good,
'Pears-like I almost *hear* ye
And git more sociabler, you know,
And hitch my cheer up near ye
And jes' smile on ye like the sun
Acrosst the whole per-rairies
In Aprile when the thaw's begun
And country couples marries.

It's all so good-old-fashioned like
To *talk* jes' like we're *thinkin'*,
Without no hidin' back o' fans
And giggle-un and winkin',

Ner sizin' how each other's dressed—
  Like some is allus doin',—
"*Is* Marthy Ellen's basque be'n *turned*
  Er shore-enough a new-un!"—

Er "ef Steve's city-friend hain't jes'
  'A *lee*tle kind o' sort o' ' "—
Er "wears them-air blame' eye-glasses
  Jes' 'cause he hadn't ort to?"—
And so straight on, *dad-libitum,*
  Tel all of us feels, *some*way,
Jes' like our "comp'ny" wuz the best
  When we git up to come 'way!

That's why I like *old* friends like *you,*—
  Jes' 'cause you're so *abidin'*.—
Ef I wuz built to live *"fer keeps,"*
  My principul residin'
Would be amongst the folks 'at kep'
  Me allus *thinkin'* of 'em,
And sort o' eechin' all the time
  To tell 'em how I love 'em.—

Sich folks, you know, I jes' love so
  I wouldn't live without 'em,
Er couldn't even drap asleep
  But what I *dreamp'* about 'em,—
And ef we minded God, I guess
  We'd *all* love one another
Jes' like one famb'ly,—me and Pap
  And Madaline and Mother.

WE DEFER THINGS

WE say and we say and we say,
We promise, engage and declare,
Till a year from to-morrow is yesterday,
And yesterday is—Where?

1637

FOR THIS CHRISTMAS

YE old-time stave that pealeth out
To Christmas revelers all,
At tavern-tap and wassail bout,
And in ye banquet hall,—
Whiles ye old burden rings again,
Add yet ye verse, as due:
"God bless you, merry gentlemen"—
And gentlewomen, too!

TO A POET-CRITIC

YES,—the bee sings—I confess it—
Sweet as honey—Heaven bless it!—
Yit he'd be a *sweeter* singer
Ef he didn't have no stinger.

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A NOON LULL

'POSSUM in de 'tater-patch;
Chicken-hawk a-hangin'
Stiddy 'bove de stable-lot,
An' cyarpet-loom a-bangin'!
Hi! Mr. Hoppergrass, chawin' yo' terbacker,
Flick ye wid er buggy-whirp yer spit er little
blacker!

Niggah in de roas'in'-yeers,
Whiskers in de shuckin';
Weasel croppin' mighty shy,
But ole hen a-cluckin'!
—What's got de matter er de mule-colt now?
Drapt in de turnip-hole, chasin' f'um de cow!

RABBIT IN THE CROSS-TIES

RABBIT in the cross-ties.—
Punch him out—quick!
Git a twister on him
With a long prong stick.
Watch him on the south side—
Watch him on the—Hi!—
There he goes! Sic him, Tige!
Yi! Yi!! Yi!!!

WHEN LIDE MARRIED *HIM*

WHEN Lide married *him*—w'y, she had to jes' dee-fy
The whole popilation!—But she never bat' an eye!
Her parents begged, and *threatened*—she must give him up—that *he*
Wuz jes' "a common drunkard!"—And he *wuz,* appearantly.—
Swore they'd chase him off the place
Ef he ever showed his face—
Long after she'd *eloped* with him and *married* him fer shore!—
When Lide married *him,* it wuz *"Katy, bar the door!"*

When Lide married *him*—Well! she had to go and be
A *hired girl* in town somewheres—while he tromped round to see
What *he* could git that *he* could do,—you might say, jes' sawed wood
From door to door!—that's what he done—'cause that wuz best he could!
And the strangest thing, i jing!
Wuz, he didn't *drink* a thing,—

But jes' got down to bizness, like he someway
wanted to,
When Lide married *him,* like they warned her *not*
to do!

When Lide married *him*—er, ruther, *had* be'n married
A little up'ards of a year—some feller come and
carried
That *hired girl* away with him—a ruther *stylish*
feller
In a bran-new green spring-wagon, with the wheels
striped red and yeller:
And he whispered, as they driv
To'rds the country, *"Now we'll live!"*—
And *somepin' else* she *laughed* to hear, though both
her eyes wuz dim,
'Bout *"trustin' Love and Heav'n above,* sence Lide
married *him!"*

"RINGWORM FRANK"

JEST Frank Reed's his *real* name—though
Boys all calls him "Ringworm Frank,"
'Cause he allus *runs round* so.—
No man can't tell where to bank
Frank'll be,
Next you see
Er *hear* of him!—Drat his melts!—
That man's allus *somers else!*

We're old pards.—But Frank he jest
Can't stay still!—Wuz *prosper'n'* here,
But lit out on furder West
Somers on a ranch, last year:
Never heard
Nary a word
How he liked it, tel to-day,
Got this card, reads thisaway:—

"Dad-burn climate out here makes
Me homesick all Winter long,
And when Spring-time *comes,* it takes
Two pee-wees to sing one song,—
One sings *'pee,'*
And the other one *'wee!'*
Stay right where you air, old pard.—
Wisht *I* wuz this postal card!"

THE YOUTHFUL PATRIOT

O WHAT did the little boy do
'At nobody wanted him to?
Didn't do nothin' but romp an' run,
An' whoop an' holler an' bang his gun
An' bu'st fire-crackers, an' ist have fun—
An' *'at's* all the little boy done!

PONCHUS PILUT

PONCHUS PILUT *ust* to be
Ist a *Slave,* an' now he's *free.*
Slaves wuz on'y ist before
The War wuz—an' *ain't* no more.

He works on our place fer us,—
An' comes here—*sometimes* he does.
He shocks corn an' shucks it.—An'
He makes hominy "by han' "!—

Wunst he bringed us some, one trip,
Tied up in a piller-slip:
Pa says, when Ma cooked it, "My!
This-here's gooder'n you *buy!*"

Ponchus *pats* fer me an' sings;
An' he says most *funny* things!
Ponchus calls a dish a *"deesh"*—
Yes, an' *he* calls fishes *"feesh"!*

When Ma want him eat wiv us
He says, " 'Skuse me—'deed you mus'!
Ponchus know' good manners, Miss.—
He ain' eat wher' White-folks is!"

'Lindy takes *his* dinner out
Wher' he's workin'—roun' about.—
Wunst he et his dinner spread
In our ole wheelborry-bed.

Ponchus Pilut says "*'at's* not
His *right* name,—an' done fergot
What his *sho'-'nuff* name is now—
An' don' matter none *no*how!"

Yes, an' Ponchus he'ps Pa, too,
When our *butcherin' 's* to do,
An' scalds hogs—an' says, "Take care
'Bout it, er you'll *set the hair!*"

Yes, an' out in our back yard
He he'ps 'Lindy rendur lard;
An', wite in the fire there, he
Roast' a pigtail wunst fer me.—

An' ist nen th'ole tavurn bell
Rung, down-town, an' he says, "Well!—
Hear dat! *Lan' o' Caanan,* Son,
Ain't dat bell say *'Pigtail done!'*

—'Pigtail done!
Go call Son!—
Tell dat
Chile dat
Pigtail done!'"

SLUMBER-SONG

SLEEP, little one! The Twilight folds her gloom
Full tenderly about the drowsy Day,
And all his tinseled hours of light and bloom
Like toys are laid away.

Sleep! sleep! The noon-sky's airy cloud of white
Has deepened wide o'er all the azure plain;
And, trailing through the leaves, the skirts of Night
Are wet with dews as rain.

But rest thou sweetly, smiling in thy dreams,
With round fists tossed like roses o'er thy head,
And thy tranc'd lips and eyelids kissed with gleams
Of rapture perfected.

THE CIRCUS PARADE

THE Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long street!

In the Circus parade there is glory clean down
From the first spangled horse to the mule of the Clown,
With the gleam and the glint and the glamour and glare
Of the days of enchantment all glimmering there!

And there are the banners of silvery fold
Caressing the winds with their fringes of gold,
And their high-lifted standards, with spear-tips aglow,
And the helmeted knights that go riding below.

There's the Chariot, wrought of some marvelous shell
The Sea gave to Neptune, first washing it well
With its fabulous waters of gold, till it gleams
Like the galleon rare of an Argonaut's dreams.

And the Elephant, too, (with his undulant stride
That rocks the high throne of a king in his pride),
That in jungles of India shook from his flanks
The tigers that leapt from the Jujubee-banks.

Here's the long, ever-changing, mysterious line
Of the Cages, with hints of their glories divine
From the barred little windows, cut high in the rear
Where the close-hidden animals' noses appear.

Here's the Pyramid-car, with its splendor and flash,
And the Goddess on high, in a hot-scarlet sash
And a pen-wiper skirt!—O the rarest of sights
Is this "Queen of the Air" in cerulean tights!

Then the far-away clash of the cymbals, and then
The swoon of the tune ere it wakens again
With the capering tones of the gallant cornet
That go dancing away in a mad minuet.

The Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the
drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon
comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long
street.

FOLKS AT LONESOMEVILLE

POORE-FOLKS lives at Lonesome-
ville—
Lawzy! but they're pore
Houses with no winders in,
And hardly any door:
Chimbly all tore down, and no
Smoke in that at all—
Ist a stovepipe through a hole
In the kitchen wall!

Pump 'at's got no handle on;
And no wood-shed—And, *wooh!*—
Mighty cold there, choppin' wood,
Like pore-folks has to do!—
Winter-time, and snow and sleet
Ist fairly fit to kill!—
Hope to goodness *Santy Claus*
Goes to Lonesomeville!

THE THREE JOLLY HUNTERS

O THERE were three jolly hunters;
And a-hunting they did go,
With a spaniel-dog, and a pointer-dog,
And a setter-dog also.
Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;
And the first thing they did find
Was a dingling-dangling hornet's-nest
A-swinging in the wind.
Looky there!

And the first one said—"What is it?"
Said the next, "We'll punch and see":
And the next one said, a mile from there,
"I wish we'd let it be!"
Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;
And the next thing they did raise
Was a bobbin' bunny cottontail
That vanished from their gaze.
Looky there!

One said it was a hot baseball,
  Zipped through the brambly thatch,
But the others said 'twas a note by post,
  Or a telegraph-despatch.
    Looky there!

So they hunted and they hal-looed;
  And the next thing they did sight
Was a great big bulldog chasing them,
  And a farmer, hollerin' "Skite!"
    Looky there!

And the first one said, "Hi-jinktum!"
  And the next, "Hi-jinktum-jee!"
And the last one said, "Them very words
  Had just occurred to me!"
    Looky there!

THE LITTLE DOG-WOGGY

A LITTLE Dog-Woggy
Once walked round the World:
So he shut up his house; and, forgetting
His two puppy-children
Locked in there, he curled
Up his tail in pink bombazine netting,
And set out
To walk round
The World.

He walked to Chicago,
And heard of the Fair—
Walked on to New York, where he *never*,—
In fact, he discovered
That many folks there
Thought less of Chicago than ever,
As he musing-
Ly walked round
The World.

He walked on to Boston,
And round Bunker Hill,
Bow-wowed, but no citizen heerd him—
Till he ordered his baggage
And called for his bill,

And then, bless their souls! how they cheered
him,
As he gladly
Walked on round
The World.

He walked and walked on
For a year and a day—
Dropped down at his own door and panted,
Till a teamster came driving
Along the highway
And told him that house there was ha'nted
By the two starve-
Dest pups in
The World.

CHARMS

I

FOR CORNS AND THINGS

PRUNE your corn in the gray of the morn
With a blade that's shaved the dead,
And barefoot go and hide it so
The rain will rust it red:
Dip your foot in the dew and put
A print of it on the floor,
And stew the fat of a brindle cat,
And say this o'er and o'er:—
Corny! morny! blady! dead!
Gory! sory! rusty! red!
Footsy! putsy! floory! stew!
Fatsy! catsy!
Mew!
Mew!
Come grease my corn
In the gray of the morn!
Mew! Mew! Mew!

1656

II

TO REMOVE FRECKLES—SCOTCH ONES

Gae the mirkest night an' stan'
'Twixt twa graves, ane either han';
Wi' the right han' fumblin' ken
Wha the deid mon's name's ance be'n,—
Wi' the ither han' sae read
Wha's neist neebor o' the deid;
An it be or wife or lass,
Smoor tha twa han's i' the grass,
Weshin' either wi' the ither,
Then tha faice wi baith thegither;
Syne ye'll seeket at cockcraw—
Ilka freckle's gang awa!

A FEW OF THE BIRD-FAMILY

THE Old Bob-white and Chipbird;
The Flicker, and Chewink,
And little hopty-skip bird
Along the river-brink.

The Blackbird, and Snowbird,
The Chicken-hawk, and Crane;
The glossy old black Crow-bird,
And Buzzard down the lane.

The Yellowbird, and Redbird,
The Tomtit, and the Cat;
The Thrush, and that Red*head*-bird
The rest's all pickin' at!

The Jay-bird, and the Bluebird,
The Sapsuck, and the Wren—
The Cockadoodle-doo-bird,
And our old Settin'-hen!

THROUGH SLEEPY-LAND

WHERE do you go when you go to sleep,
Little Boy! Little Boy! where?
'Way—'way in where's Little Bo-Peep,
And Little Boy Blue, and the Cows and Sheep
A-wandering 'way in there—in there—
A-wandering 'way in there!

And what do you see when lost in dreams,
Little Boy, 'way in there?
Firefly-glimmers and glowworm gleams,
And silvery, low, slow-sliding streams,
And mermaids, smiling out—'way in where
They're a-hiding—'way in there!

Where do you go when the Fairies call,
Little Boy! Little Boy! where?
Wade through the dews of the grasses tall,
Hearing the weir and the waterfall
And the Wee Folk—'way in there—in
there—
And the Kelpies—'way in there!

And what do you do when you wake at dawn,
Little Boy! Little Boy! what?
Hug my Mommy and kiss her on
Her smiling eyelids, sweet and wan,
And tell her everything I've forgot,
A-wandering 'way in there—in there—
Through the blind-world 'way in there!

THE TRESTLE AND THE BUCK-SAW

THE Trestle and the Buck-Saw
Went out a-walking once,
And stayed away and stayed away
For days and weeks and months:
And when they got back home again,
Of all that had occurred,
The neighbors said the gossips said
They never said a word.

THE KING OF OO-RINKTUM-JING

DAINTY Baby Austin!
Your Daddy's gone to Boston
To see the King
Of Oo-Rinktum-Jing
And the whale he rode acrost on!

Boston Town's a city:
But O it's such a pity!—
They'll greet the King
Of Oo-Rinktum-Jing
With never a nursery ditty!

But me and you and Mother
Can stay with Baby-brother,
And sing of the King
Of Oo-Rinktum-Jing
And laugh at one another!

So what cares Baby Austin
If Daddy *has* gone to Boston
To see the King
Of Oo-Rinktum-Jing
And the whale he rode acrost on?

THE TOY PENNY-DOG

MA put my Penny-Dog
Safe on the shelf,
An' left no one home but him,
Me an' myself;
So I clumbed a big chair
I pushed to the wall—
But the Toy Penny-Dog
Ain't there at all!
I went back to Dolly—
An' *she* 'uz gone too,
An' little Switch 'uz layin' there;—
An' Ma says *"Boo!"*—
An' there she wuz a-peepin'
Through the front-room door:
An' I ain't goin' to be a bad
Little girl no more!

JARGON-JINGLE

TAWDERY!—faddery! Feathers and fuss!
Mummery!—flummery! Wusser and wuss!
All o' Humanity—Vanity Fair!—
Heaven for nothin', and—nobody there!

THE GREAT EXPLORER

HE sailed o'er the weltery watery miles
For a tabular year-and-a-day,
To the kindless, kinkable Cannibal Isles
He sailed and he sailed away!
He captured a loon in a wild lagoon,
And a yak that weeps and smiles,
And a bustard-bird, and a blue baboon,
In the kindless Cannibal Isles
And wilds
Of the kinkable Cannibal Isles.

He swiped in bats with his butterfly-net,
In the kindless Cannibal Isles
And got short-waisted and over-het
In the haunts of the crocodiles;
And nine or ten little Pigmy Men
Of the quaintest shapes and styles
He shipped back home to his old Aunt Jenn,
From the kindless Cannibal Isles
And wilds
Of the kinkable Cannibal Isles.

THE SCHOOLBOY'S FAVORITE

Over the river and through the wood
Now Grandmother's cap I spy:
Hurrah for the fun!—Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!
—SCHOOL READER

FER any boy 'at's little as me,
Er any little girl,
That-un's the goodest poetry piece
In any book in the worl'!
An' ef grown-peoples wuz little ag'in
I bet they'd say so, too,
Ef *they'd* go see *their* ole Gran'ma,
Like our Pa lets *us* do!

Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

An' 'll tell *you* why 'at's the goodest piece:—
'Cause it's ist like *we* go
To *our* Gran'ma's, a-visitun there,
When our Pa he says so;

An' Ma she fixes my little cape-coat
  An' little fuzz-cap; an' Pa
He tucks me away—an' yells *"Hoo-ray!"*—
An' whacks Ole Gray, an' drives the sleigh
  Fastest you ever saw!

Over the river an' through the wood
  Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
  Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

An' Pa ist snuggles me 'tween his knees—
  An' I he'p hold the lines,
An' peek out over the buffalo-robe;—
An' the wind ist *blows!*—an' the snow ist
    snows!—
  An' the sun ist shines! an' shines!—
An' th' ole horse tosses his head an' coughs
  The frost back in our face.—
An' I' ruther go to my Gran'ma's
  Than any other place!

Over the river an' through the wood
  Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
  Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

An' all the peoples they is in town
  Watches us whizzin' past
To go a-visitun *our* Gran'ma's,
  Like we all went there last;—

But *they* can't go, like ist *our* folks
An' Johnny an' Lotty, and three
Er four neighber-childerns, an' Rober-ut Volney,
An' Charley an' Maggy an' me!

Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

ALBUMANIA

Some certain misty yet tenable signs
Of the oracular Raggedy Man,
Happily found in these fugitive lines
Culled from the Album of 'Lizabuth Ann.

FRIENDSHIP

O FRIENDSHIP, when I muse on you,
As thoughtful minds, O Friendship, do,
I muse, O Friendship, o'er and o'er,
O Friendship—as I said before.

LIFE

"What is Life?" If the *Dead* might say,
'Spect they'd answer, under breath,
Sorry-like yet a-laughin':—A
Poor pale yesterday of Death!

LIFE'S HAPPIEST HOURS

Best, I guess,
Was the old *"Recess."*—
'Way back there's where I'd love to be—

Shet of each lesson and hateful rule,
When the whole round World was as sweet to me
As the big ripe apple I brung to School.

MARION-COUNTY MAN HOMESICK ABROAD

I, who had hobnobbed with the shades of kings,
And canvassed grasses from old masters' graves,
And in cathedrals stood and looked at things
In niches, crypts and naves;—
My heavy heart was sagging with its woe,
Nor Hope to prop it up, nor Promise, nor
One woman's hands—and O I wanted so
To be felt sorry for!

BIRDY! BIRDY!

The Redbreast loves the blooming bough—
The Bluebird loves it same as he;—
And as they sit and sing there now,
So do I sing to thee—
Only, dear heart, unlike the birds,
I do not climb a tree
To sing—
I do not climb a tree.

When o'er this page, in happy years to come,
Thou jokest on these lines and on my name,
Doubt not my love and say, "Though he lies dumb,
He's lying, just the same!"

THE LITTLE MOCK-MAN

THE Little Mock-man on the Stairs—
He mocks the lady's horse 'at rares
At bi-sickles an' things,—
He mocks the mens 'at rides 'em, too;
An' mocks the Movers, drivin' through,
An' hollers, "Here's the way *you* do
With them-air hitchin'-strings!"
"Ho! ho!" he'll say,
Ole Settlers' Day,
When they're all jogglin' by,—
"You look like *this*,"
He'll say, an' twis'
His mouth an' squint his eye
An' 'tend-like *he* wuz beat the bass
Drum at both ends—an' toots an' blares
Ole dinner-horn an' puffs his face—
The Little Mock-man on the Stairs!

The Little Mock-man on the Stairs
Mocks all the peoples all he cares
'At passes up an' down!
He mocks the chickens round the door,
An' mocks the girl 'at scrubs the floor,

An' mocks the rich, an' mocks the pore,
An' ever'thing in town!
"Ho! ho!" says he,
To you er me;
An' ef we turns an' looks,
He's all cross-eyed
An' mouth all wide
Like Giunts is, in books.—
"Ho! ho!" he yells, "look here at *me,*"
An' rolls his fat eyes roun' an' glares,—
"*You* look like *this!*" he says, says he—
The Little Mock-man on the Stairs!

The Little Mock—
The Little Mock—
The Little Mock-man on the Stairs,
He mocks the music-box an' clock,
An' roller-sofy an' the chairs;
He mocks his Pa, an' specs he wears;
He mocks the man 'at picks the pears
An' plums an' peaches on the shares;
He mocks the monkeys an' the bears
On picture-bills, an' rips an' tears
'Em down,—an' mocks ist all he cares,
An' EVER*'body* EVER*'wheres!*

SUMMER-TIME AND WINTER-TIME

IN the golden noon-shine,
Or in the pink of dawn;
In the silver moonshine,
Or when the moon is gone;
Open eyes, or drowsy lids,
'Wake or 'most asleep,
I can hear the katydids,—
"Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

Only in the winter-time
Do they ever stop,
In the chip-and-splinter-time,
When the backlogs pop,—
Then it is, the kettle-lids,
While the sparkles leap,
Lisp like the katydids,—
"Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

HOME-MADE RIDDLES

ALL BUT THE ANSWERS

I

NO one ever saw it
  Till I dug it from the ground;
I found it when I lost it,
  And lost it when I found:
I washed it, and dressed it,
  And buried it once more—
Dug it up, and loved it then
  Better than before.
I was paid for finding it—
  I don't know why or how,—
But I lost, found, and kept it,
  And haven't got it now.

II

Sometimes it's all alone—
  Sometimes in a crowd;
It says a thousand bright things,
  But never talks aloud.
Everybody loves it,
  And likes to have it call.

But if you shouldn't happen to,
  It wouldn't care at all.
First you see or hear of it,
  It's a-singing,—then
You may look and listen,
  But it never sings again.

THE LOVELY CHILD

LILIES are both pure and fair,
Growing 'midst the roses there—
Roses, too, both red and pink,
Are quite beautiful, I think.

But of all bright blossoms—best—
Purest—fairest—loveliest,—
Could there be a sweeter thing
Than a primrose, blossoming?

THE YELLOWBIRD

HEY! my little Yellowbird,
  What you doing there?
Like a flashing sun-ray,
  Flitting everywhere:
Dangling down the tall weeds
  And the hollyhocks,
And the lordly sunflowers
  Along the garden-walks.

Ho! my gallant Golden-bill,
  Pecking 'mongst the weeds,
You must have for breakfast
  Golden flower-seeds:
Won't you tell a little fellow
  What you have for *tea?*—
'Spect a peck o' yellow, mellow
  Pippin on the tree.

SAD PERVERSITY

WHEN but a little boy, it seemed
My dearest rapture ran
In fancy ever, when I dreamed
I was a man—a man!

Now—sad perversity!—my theme
Of rarest, purest joy
Is when, in fancy blest, I dream
I am a little boy.

A FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR

THEY'S a kind o' *feel* in the air, to me,
When the Chris'mas-times sets in,
That's about as much of a mystery
As ever I've run ag'in'!—
Fer instunce, now, whilse I gain in weight
And gineral health, I swear
They's a *goneness* somers I can't quite state—
A kind o' *feel* in the air!

They's a feel in the Chris'mas-air goes right
To the spot where a man *lives* at!—
It gives a feller a' appetite—
They ain't no doubt about *that!*—
And yit they's *somepin'*—I don't know what—
That follers me, here and there,
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—
A kind o' feel in the air!

They's a *feel,* as I say, in the air that's jest
As blame-don sad as sweet!—
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best
And am spryest on my feet,

They's allus a kind o' sort of a *ache*
That I can't lo-cate no-where;—
But it comes with *Chris'mas,* and no mistake!—
A kind o' feel in the air.

Is it the racket the childern raise?—
W'y, *no!*—God bless 'em!—*no!*—
Is it the eyes and the cheeks ablaze—
Like my *own* wuz, long ago?—
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat
O' the little toy-drum and blare
O' the horn?—*No! no!*—it is jest the sweet—
The sad-sweet feel in the air.

MISTER HOP-TOAD

HOWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sense I seen you hereabout.
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!
Plow's like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over even;
Loam's like gingerbread, and clods's softer'n deceivin'—
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true—Spring-time—don't you love it?
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh! oh! oh!
I grabs up my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

Make yourse'f more comfo'bler—square 'round at your ease—
Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below your knees.

Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see
you swaller;
Straighten up and h'ist your head!—*You* don't owe
a dollar!—
Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes,
nuther;
You don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd
ruther.
'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I railly wouldn't
keer
To swap fer life and hop right in the presidential
cheer!

Oh! oh! oh!
I hauls back my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the
hurry?—
Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you
back and smiled?—
W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like
a child!
S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you
air?—
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you
wear?
Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed
rowdy!—

Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell me
"Howdy"?

Oh! oh! oh!
I swish round my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

THE SILENT SINGER

MRS. D. M. JORDAN, APRIL 29, 1895

ALL sudden she hath ceased to sing,
Hushed in eternal slumbering,
And we make moan that she is dead.—
Nay; peace! be comforted.

Between her singing and her tears
She pauses, listening—and she hears
The Song we can not hear.—And thus
She mutely pities us.

Could she speak out, we doubt not she
Would turn to us full tenderly,
And in the old melodious voice
Say: "Weep not, but rejoice."

Ay, musical as waters run
In woodland rills through shade and sun,
The sweet voice would flow on and say,—
"Be glad with me to-day.—

"Your Earth was very dear and fair
To me—the groves and grasses there;
The bursting buds and blossoms—O
I always loved them so!—

"The very dews within them seemed
Reflected by mine eyes and gleamed
Adown my cheeks in what you knew
As 'tears,' and not as dew.

"Your birds, too, in the orchard-boughs—
I could not hear them from the house,
But I must leave my work and stray
Out in the open day

"And the illimitable range
Of their vast freedom—always strange
And new to me—It pierced my heart
With sweetness as a dart!—

"The singing! singing! singing!—All
The trees bloomed blossoms musical
That chirped and trilled in colors till
My whole soul seemed to fill

"To overflow with music, so
That I have found me kneeling low
Midst the lush grass, with murmurous words
Thanking the flowers and birds.

"So with the ones to me most dear—
I loved them, as I love them Here:
  Bear with my memory, therefore,
    As when in days of yore,

"O friends of mine, ye praised the note
Of some song, quavering from my throat
  Out of the overstress of love
    And all the pain thereof.

"And ye, too, do I love with this
Same love—and Heaven knows all it is,—
  The birds' song in it—bud and bloom—
    The turf, but not the tomb."

Between her singing and her tears
She pauses, listening—and she hears
  The Song we can not hear.—And thus
    She mutely pities us.

THE GREEN GRASS OF OLD IRELAND

THE green grass av owld Ireland!
Whilst I be far away,
All fresh an' clean an' jewel-green
It's growin' there to-day.
Oh, it's cleaner, greener growin'—
All the grassy worrld around,
It's greener yet nor any grass
That grows on top o' ground!

The green grass av owld Ireland,
Indade, an' balm 't'ud be
To eyes like mine that drip wid brine
As salty as the sea!
For still the more I'm stoppin' here,
The more I'm sore to see
The glory av the green grass av owld Ireland.

Ten years ye've paid my airnin's—
I've the l'avin's on the shelf,
Though I be here widout a queen
An' own meself meself:

I'm comin' over steerage,
  But I'm goin' back firrst-class,
Patrollin' av the foremost deck
  For firrst sight av the grass.

God bless yez, free Ameriky!
  I love yez, dock an' shore!
I kem to yez in poverty
  That's worstin' me no more
But most I'm lovin' Erin yet,
  Wid all her graves, d'ye see,
By reason av the green grass av owld Ireland.

A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1895:
TWENTY-NINTH ENCAMPMENT, G. A. R.

THERE'S a Voice across the Nation like a
mighty ocean-hail,
Borne up from out the Southward as the seas before
the gale;
Its breath is in the streaming Flag and in the flying
sail—
As we go sailing on.

'Tis a Voice that we remember—ere its summons
soothed as now—
When it rang in battle-challenge, and we answered
vow with vow,—
With roar of gun and hiss of sword and crash of
prow and prow,
As we went sailing on.

Our hope sank, even as we saw the sun sink faint
and far,—
The Ship of State went groping through the blind-
ing smoke of War—
Through blackest midnight lurching, all uncheered
of moon or star,
Yet sailing—sailing on.

'As One who spake the dead awake, with life-blood leaping warm—
Who walked the troubled waters, all unscathed, in mortal form,—
We felt our Pilot's presence with His hand upon the storm,
As we went sailing on.

O Voice of passion lulled to peace, this dawning of To-day—
O Voices twain now blent as one, ye sing all fears away,
Since foe and foe are friends, and lo! the Lord, as glad as they.—
He sends us sailing on.

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

WHAT is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me
ketch my breath
And ripples up my backbone tel I'm tickled most to
death?—
Kind o' like that sweet-sick feelin', in the long
sweep of a swing,
The first you ever swung in, with yer first sweet-
heart, i jing!—
Yer first picnic—yer first ice-cream—yer first o'
ever'thing
'At happened 'fore yer dancin'-days wuz over!

I never understood it—and I s'pose I never can,—
But right in town here, yisterd'y I heard a pore
blind man
A-fiddlin' old "Gray Eagle"—*And*-sir! I jes'
stopped my load
O' hay and listened at him—yes, and watched the
way he "bow'd,"—
And back I went, plum forty year', with boys and
girls I knowed
And loved, long 'fore my dancin'-days wuz
over!—

At high noon in yer city,—with yer blame' Magnetic-Cars
A-hummin' and a-screetchin' past—and bands and G. A. R.'s
A-marchin'—and fire-ingines.—*All* the noise, the whole street through,
Wuz lost on me!—I only heard a whipperwill er two,
It 'peared-like, kind o' callin' 'crost the darkness and the dew,
Them nights afore my dancin'-days wuz over.

'T'uz Chused'y-night at Wetherell's, er We'n'sd'y-night at Strawn's,
Er Fourth-o'-July-night at uther Tomps's house er John's!—
With old Lew Church from Sugar Crick, with that old fiddle he
Had sawed clean through the Army, from Atlanty to the sea—
And yit he'd fetched her home ag'in, so's he could play fer me
Onc't more afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

The woods 'at's all be'n cut away wuz growin' same as then;
The youngsters all wuz boys ag'in 'at's now all oldish men;
And all the girls 'at *then* wuz girls—I saw 'em, one and all,

As *plain* as then—the middle-sized, the short-and-fat, and tall—
And 'peared-like, I danced "Tucker" fer 'em up and down the wall
Jes' like afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

. . . . . .

The facts is, I wuz *dazed* so 'at I clean fergot jes' where
I railly wuz,—a-blockin' streets, and still a-standin' there:
I heard the *po*-leece yellin', but my ears wuz kind o' *blurred*—
My *eyes,* too, fer the odds o' that,—bekase I thought I heard
My wife 'at's dead a-laughin'-like, and jokin', word-fer-word
Jes' like afore her dancin'-days wuz over.

EUGENE FIELD

WITH gentlest tears, no less than jubilee
Of blithest joy, we heard him, and still hear
Him singing on, with full voice, pure and clear,
Uplifted, as some classic melody
In sweetest legends of old minstrelsy;
Or, swarming Elfin-like upon the ear,
His airy notes make all the atmosphere
One blur of bird and bee and lullaby.
His tribute:—Luster in the faded bloom
Of cheeks of old, old mothers; and the fall
Of gracious dews in eyes long dry and dim;
And hope in lover's pathways midst perfume
Of woodland haunts; and—meed exceeding all,—
The love of little children laurels him.

DREAM-MARCH

WASN'T it a funny dream!—perfectly be-
wild'rin'!—
Last night, and night before, and night before
that,
Seemed like I saw the march o' regiments o' chil-
dren,
Marching to the robin's fife and cricket's rat-ta-
tat!
Lily-banners overhead, with the dew upon 'em,
On flashed the little army, as with sword and
flame;
Like the buzz o' bumble-wings, with the honey on
'em,
Came an eery, cheery chant, chiming as it
came:—

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to kindergarten; some go to day-school;
Some go to night-school; and some go to bed!

Smooth roads or rough roads, warm or winter
weather,
On go the children, towhead and brown,
Brave boys and brave girls, rank and file together,
Marching out of Morning-Land, over dale and
down:

Some go a-gipsying out in country places—
  Out through the orchards, with blossoms on the boughs
Wild, sweet, and pink and white as their own glad faces;
  And some go, at evening, calling home the cows.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
  Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to foreign wars, and camps by the fire-light—
  Some go to glory so; and some go to bed!

Some go through grassy lanes leading to the city—
  Thinner grow the green trees and thicker grows the dust;
Ever, though, to little people any path is pretty
  So it leads to newer lands, as they know it must.
Some go to singing less; some go to list'ning;
  Some go to thinking over ever-nobler themes;
Some go anhungered, but ever bravely whistling,
  Turning never home again only in their dreams.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
  Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to conquer things; some go to try them;
  Some go to dream them; and some go to bed!

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

PA he bringed me here to stay
'Til my Ma she's well.—An' nen
He's go' hitch up, Chris'mus-day,
An' come take me back again
Wher' my Ma's at! Won't I be
Tickled when he comes fer me!

My Ma an' my A'nty they
'Uz each-uvver's sisters. Pa—
A'nty telled me, th' other day,—
He comed here an' married Ma. . . .
A'nty said nen, "Go run play,
I must work now!" . . . An' I saw,
When she turn' her face away,
She 'uz cryin'.—An' nen I
'Tend-like I "run play"—an' cry.

This-here house o' A'nty's wher'
They 'uz borned—my Ma an' her!—
An' her Ma 'uz my Ma's Ma,
An' her Pa 'uz my Ma's Pa—
Ain't that funny?—An' they're dead:

An' this-here's "th' ole Homestead."—
An' my A'nty said, an' cried,
It's mine, too, ef my Ma died—
Don't know what she mean—'cause my
Ma she's nuvver go' to die!

When Pa bringed me here 't'uz night—
'Way dark night! An' A'nty spread
Me a piece—an' light the light
An' say I must go to bed.—
I cry not to—but Pa said,
"Be good boy now, like you telled
Mommy 'at you're go' to be!"
An', when he 'uz kissin' me
My good night, his cheek's all wet
An' taste salty.—An' he held
Wite close to me an' rocked some
An' laughed-like—'til A'nty come
Git me while he's rockin' yet.

A'nty he'p me, 'til I be
Purt' nigh strip-pud—nen hug me
In bofe arms an' lif' me 'way
Up in her high bed—an' pray
Wiv me,—'bout my Ma—an' Pa—
An' ole Santy Claus—an' Sleigh—
An' Reindeers an' little Drum—
Yes, an' Picture-books, "Tom Thumb,"
An' "Three Bears," an' ole "Fee-Faw"—
Yes, an' "Tweedle-Dee" an' "Dum,"

An' "White Knight" an' "Squidjicum,"
An' most things you ever saw!—
An' when A'nty kissed me, she
'Uz all cryin' over me!

Don't want Santy Claus—ner things
Any kind he ever brings!—
Don't want A'nty!—Don't want Pa!—
I ist only want my Ma!

TO ALMON KEEFER

INSCRIBED IN "TALES OF THE OCEAN"

THIS first book that I ever knew
Was read aloud to me by you—
Friend of my boyhood, therefore take
It back from me, for old times' sake—
The selfsame "Tales" first read to me,
Under "the old sweet apple tree,"
Ere I myself could read such great
Big words,—but listening all elate,
At your interpreting, until
Brain, heart and soul were all athrill
With wonder, awe, and sheer excess
Of wildest childish happiness.

So take the book again—forget
All else,—long years, lost hopes, regret;
Sighs for the joys we ne'er attain,
Prayers we have lifted all in vain;
Tears for the faces seen no more,
Once as the roses at the door!

Take the enchanted book—And lo,
On grassy swards of long ago,
Sprawl out again, beneath the shade
The breezy old-home orchard made,
The veriest barefoot boy indeed—
And I will listen as you read.

LITTLE MAID-O'-DREAMS

LITTLE Maid-o'-Dreams, with your
Eery eyes so clear and pure
Gazing, where we fain would see
Into far futurity,—
Tell us what you there behold,
In your visions manifold!
What is on beyond our sight,
Biding till the morrow's light,
Fairer than we see to-day,
As our dull eyes only may?

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, with face
Like as in some woodland place
Lifts a lily, chaste and white,
From the shadow to the light;—
Tell us, by your subtler glance,
What strange sorcery enchants
You as now,—here, yet afar
As the realms of moon and star?—
Have you magic lamp and ring,
And genii for vassaling?

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, confess
You're divine and nothing less,—
For with mortal palms, we fear,
Yet must pet you, dreaming here—
Yearning, too, to lift the tips
Of your fingers to our lips;
Fearful still you may rebel,
High and heav'nly oracle!
Thus, though all unmeet our kiss,
Pardon this!—and this!—and this!

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, we call
Truce and favor, knowing all!—
All your magic is, in truth,
Pure foresight and faith of youth—
You're a child, yet even so,
You're a sage, in embryo—
Prescient poet—artist—great
As your dreams anticipate.—
Trusting God and Man, you do
Just as Heaven inspires you to.

EDGAR WILSON NYE

FEBRUARY 22, 1896

THE saddest silence falls when Laughter lays
Finger on lip, and falteringly breaks
The glad voice into dying minor shakes
And quavers, lorn as airs the wind-harp plays
At urge of drearest Winter's bleakest days:
A troubled hush, in which all hope forsakes
Us, and the yearning upstrained vision aches
With tears that drown e'en heaven from our gaze.
Such silence—after such glad merriment!
O prince of halest humor, wit and cheer!
Could you yet speak to us, I doubt not we
Should catch your voice, still blithely eloquent
Above all murmurings of sorrow here,
Calling your love back to us laughingly.

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